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e Traitor to the South

Cyrus Townsend Brady

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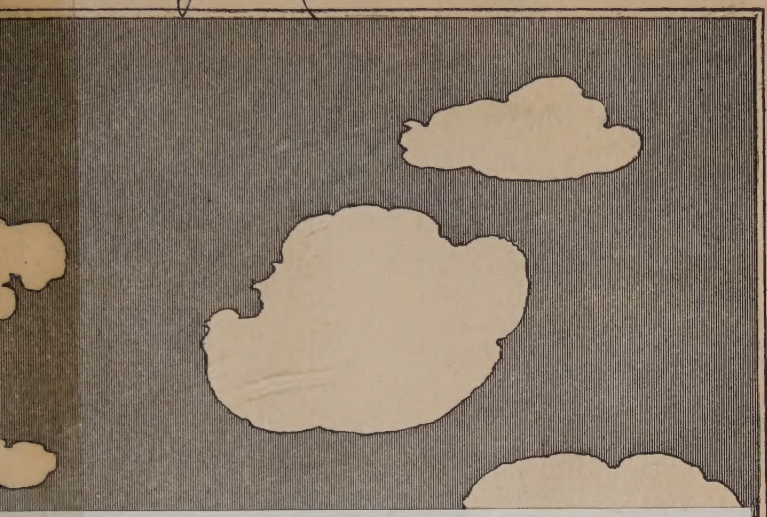

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A Little Traitor to the South

"Miss Fanny Glen detested a masterful man."

A Little Traitor to the South

A WAR-TIME COMEDY
With a
TRAGIC INTERLUDE

By

Cyrus Townsend Brady

NEW YORK
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PUBLISHERS

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To "Patty"

Most Faithful and Efficient of Coadjutors

156064

PREFACE

"THE tragic interlude" in this little war-time comedy of the affections really happened as I have described it. The men who went to their death beside the *Housatonic* in Charleston harbor were Lieutenant George F. Dixon of the Twenty-first Alabama Infantry, in command; Captain J. F. Carlson of Wagoner's Battery; and Seamen Becker, Simpkins, Wicks, Collins, and Ridgway of the Confederate Navy, all volunteers. These names should be written in letters of gold on the roll of heroes. No more gallant exploit was ever performed. The qualities and characteristics of that death trap, the *David*, were well known to everybody. The history of former attempts to work her is accurately set down in the text of the story. Dixon and his men should be remembered with Decatur, Cushing, Nields, and Hobson.

The torpedo boat was found after the war lying on the bottom of the harbor, about one hundred feet from the wreck of the *Housatonic*, with her bow pointing toward the sloop of war and with every man of her crew dead at his post, — just as they all expected.

I shall be happy if this novel serves to call renewed attention to this splendid exhibition of American heroism. Had they not fought for a cause which was lost they would still be remembered, as, in any event, they ought to be.

For the rest, here is a love story in which the beautiful Southern girl does not espouse the brave Union soldier, or the beautiful Northern girl the brave Southern soldier. They were all Southern, all true to the South, and they all stayed so except Admiral Vernon, and he does not count.

CYRUS TOWNSEND BRADY.

Brooklyn, N.Y.,
February, 1904.

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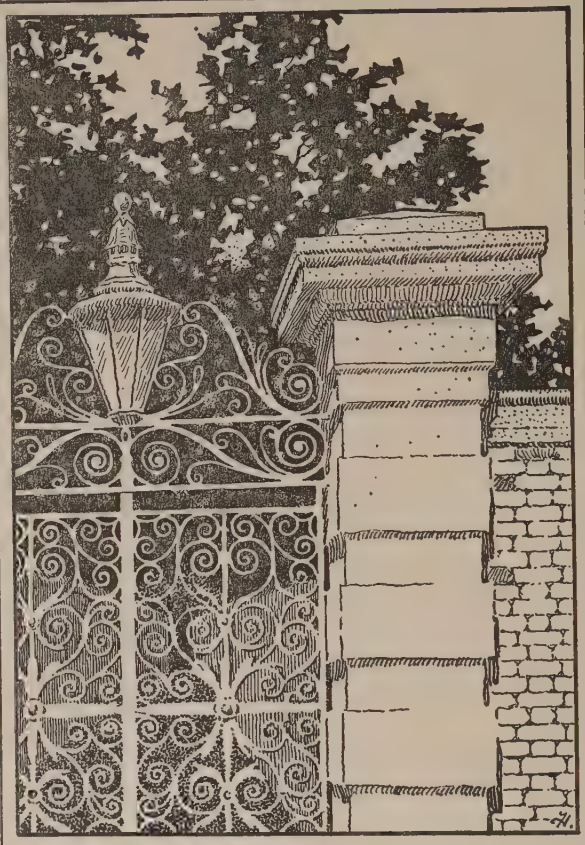
CHAPTER I

HERO VERSUS GENTLEMAN



A Little Traitor to the South

CHAPTER I

HERO VERSUS GENTLEMAN

Miss Fanny Glen's especial detestation was an assumption of authority on the part of the other sex. If there was a being on earth to whom she would not submit, it was to a masterful man; such a man as, if appearances were a criterion, Rhett Sempland at that moment assumed to be.

The contrast between the two was amusing, or would have been had not the atmosphere been so surcharged with passionate feeling, for Rhett Sempland was six feet high if he was an inch, while Fanny Glen by a Procrustean extension of herself could just manage to cover the five-foot mark; yet such was the spirit permeating the smaller figure that there seemed to be no great disparity, from the standpoint of combatants, between them after all.

Rhett Sempland was deeply in love with Miss Fanny Glen. His full consciousness of that fact shaded his attempted mastery by ever so little.

He was sure of the state of his affections and by that knowledge the weaker, for Fanny Glen was not at all sure that she was in love with Rhett Sempland. That is to say, she had not yet realized it; perhaps

better, she had not yet admitted the existence of a reciprocal passion in her own breast to that she had long since learned had sprung up in his. By just that lack of admission she was stronger than he for the moment.

When she discovered the undoubted fact that she did love Rhett Sempland her views on the mastery of man would probably alter — at least for a time! Love, in its freshness, would make her a willing slave; for how long, events only could determine. For some women a lifetime, for others but an hour, can elapse before the chains turn from adornments to shackles.

The anger that Miss Fanny Glen felt at this particular moment gave her a temporary reassurance as to some questions which had agitated her — how much she cared, after all, for Lieutenant Rhett Sempland, and did she

like him better than Major Harry Lacy? Both questions were instantly decided in the negative — for the time being. She hated Rhett Sempland; *per contra*, at that moment, she loved Harry Lacy. For Harry Lacy was he about whom the difference began. Rhett Sempland, confident of his own affection and hopeful as to hers, had attempted, with masculine futility and obtuseness, to prohibit the further attentions of Harry Lacy.

Just as good blood, *au fond*, ran in Harry Lacy's veins as in Rhett Sempland's, but Lacy, following in the footsteps of his ancestors, had mixed his with the water that is not water because it is fire.

He "crooked the pregnant hinges" of the elbow without cessation, many a time and oft, and all the vices — as they usually do — followed *en train*. One of the oldest

names in the Carolinas had been dragged in the dust by this latest and most degenerate scion thereof. Nay, in that dust Lacy had wallowed — shameless, persistent, beast-like.

To Lacy, therefore, the Civil War came as a godsend, as it had to many another man in like circumstances, for it afforded another and more congenial outlet for the wild passion beating out from his heart. The war sang to him of arms and men — ay, as war has sung since Troia's day, of women, too.

He did not give over the habits of a lifetime, which, though short, had been hard, but he leavened them, temporarily obliterated them even, by splendid feats of arms. Fortune was kind to him. Opportunity smiled upon him. Was it running the blockade off Charleston, or passing

through the enemy's lines with despatches in Virginia, or heading a desperate attack on Little Round Top in Pennsylvania, he always won the plaudits of men, often the love of women. And in it all he seemed to bear a charmed life.

When the people saw him intoxicated on the streets of Charleston that winter of '63 they remembered that he was a hero. When some of his more flagrant transgressions came to light, they recalled some splendid feat of arms, and condoned what before they had censured.

He happened to be in Charleston because he had been shot to pieces at Gettysburg and had been sent down there to die. But die he would not, at least not then. Ordinarily he would not have cared much about living, for he realized that, when the war was over, he would speedily sink back to

that level to which he habitually descended when there was nothing to engage his energies; but his acquaintance with Miss Fanny Glen had altered him.

Lacy met her in the hospital and there he loved her. Rhett Sempland met her in a hospital, also. Poor Sempland had been captured in an obscure skirmish late in 1861. Through some hitch in the matter he had been held prisoner in the North until the close of 1863, when he had been exchanged and, wretchedly ill, he had come back to Charleston, like Lacy, to die.

He had found no opportunity for distinction of any sort. There was no glory about his situation, but prison life and fretting had made him show what he had suffered. At the hospital, then, like Lacy, he too had fallen in love with Miss Fanny Glen.

By rights the hero — not of this story, perhaps, but the real hero — was much the handsomer of the two. It is always so in romances; and romances — good ones, that is — are the reflex of life. Such a combination of manly beauty with unshakable courage and reckless audacity was not often seen as Lacy exhibited. Sempland was homely. Lacy had French and Irish blood in him, and he showed it. Sempland was a mixture of sturdy Dutch and English stock.

Yet if women found Lacy charming they instinctively depended upon Sempland. There was something thoroughly attractive in Sempland, and Fanny Glen unconsciously fell under the spell of his strong personality. The lasting impression which the gayety and passionate abandon of Lacy could not make, Sempland

had effected, and the girl was already powerfully under his influence — stubbornly resistant nevertheless.

She was fond of both men. She loved Lacy for the dangers he had passed, and Sempland because she could not help it; which marks the relative quality of her affections. Which one she loved the better until the moment at which the story opens she could not have told.

Nobody knew anything about Fanny Glen. At least there were only two facts concerning her in possession of the general public. These, however, were sufficient. One was that she was good. The men in the hospital called her an angel. The other was that she was beautiful. The women of the city could not exactly see why the men thought so, which was confirmation strong as proofs of Holy Writ!

She had come to Charleston at the outbreak of the war accompanied by an elderly woman of unexceptional manner and appearance who called herself Miss Lucy Glen, and described herself as Miss Fanny Glen's aunt. They had taken a house in the fashionable quarter of the city — they were not poor at any rate — and had installed themselves therein with their slaves.

They made no attempt to enter into the social life of the town and only became prominent when Charleston began to feel acutely the hardships of the war which it had done more to promote than any other place in the land.

Then Fanny Glen showed her quality. A vast hospital was established, and the young women of the city volunteered their services.

The corps of nurses was in a state of

constant fluxion. Individuals came and went. Some of them married patients, some of them died with them, but Fanny Glen neither married nor died—she abided!

Not merely because she stayed while others did not, but perhaps on account of her innate capacity, as well as her tactful tenderness, she became the chief of the women attached to the hospital. Many a sick soldier lived to love her. Many another, more sorely stricken, died blessing her.

In Charleston she was regarded as next in importance to the general who commanded the troops and who, with his ships, his forts, his guns, and his men, had been for two years fighting off the tremendous assaults that were hurled upon the city from the Union ironclads and ships far out to sea. It was a point of honor to take, or to

hold, Charleston, and the Confederates held it till 1865!

Fanny Glen was a privileged character, therefore, and could go anywhere and do anything, within the lines.

Under other circumstances there would have been a thorough inquiry by the careful inhabitants of the proud, strict Southern city into her family relationships; but the war was a great leveller, people were taken at their real value when trouble demonstrated it, and few questions were asked. Those that were asked about Fanny Glen were not answered. It made little difference, then.

Toward the close of 1863, however, there was an eclipse in the general hospital, for Fanny Glen fell ill.

She was not completely recovered, early in 1864, when she had the famous inter-

view with Rhett Sempland, but there was not the slightest evidence of invalidism about her as she confronted him that afternoon in February.

Wounded pride, outraged dignity, burning indignation, supplied strength and spirit enough for a regiment of convalescents.

The difference between the two culminated in a disturbance which might aptly be called cyclonic, for Sempland on nearly the first occasion that he had been permitted to leave the hospital had repaired to Fanny Glen's house and there had repeated, standing erect and looking down upon her bended head, what he had said so often with his eyes and once at least with his lips, from his bed in the ward: that he loved her and wanted her for his wife.

Pleasant thing it was for her to hear, too, she could not but admit.

Yet if Fanny Glen had not rejected him, neither had she accepted him.

She had pleaded for time, she had hesitated, and would have been lost, had Sempland been as wise as he was brave. Perhaps he wasn't quite master of himself on account of his experience in war, and his lack of it in women, for he instantly conceived that her hesitation was due to some other cause than maidenly incertitude, and that Harry Lacy, of whom he had grown mightily jealous, was at the bottom of it.

He hated and envied Lacy. More, he despised him for his weaknesses and their consequences. The two had been great friends once, but a year or two before the outbreak of the war they had drifted apart.

Sempland did not envy Lacy any talents that he might possess, for he was quite confident that the only thing he himself lacked had

been opportunity — Fate had not been kind to him, but the war was not yet over. Consequently when he jumped to the conclusion that Fanny Glen preferred Lacy, he fell into further error, and made the frightful mistake of depreciating his rival.

Assuming with masculine inconsistency that the half acceptance she had given him entitled him to decide her future, he actually referred to Lacy's well-known habits and bade her have nothing to do with him.

CHAPTER II

SHE HATES THEM BOTH

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"You are," he said at last, "a lonely, unprotected young girl. Where you come from or what you have been doesn't matter to me. I know what you are. And that is why I love you. You have no father or brother to advise you. I must do it and I will, much as it pains me. If you won't take my affection, you must my counsel," — he called it counsel, but only an expert could have distinguished it from command — "you do not know this man Lacy. He is a dissolute, abandoned — "

"Stop!" cried the girl. "To me he is always a gentleman — a hero."

"The man is brave enough, I'll admit. And he has done some fine things."

"Yes, while other men have escaped dangers by being made prisoners."

By that unkind remark she lost a large part of her advantage.

"As you say," he returned, wincing under her cruel thrust, but persistent, "but we are not discussing me now, but Lacy."

"Speaking of wickedness, you would better discuss yourself, I think, than him."

"I will not be put off in this way, Miss Fan —"

"Miss Glen, please," she interrupted, but he paid no attention.

"Lacy is well enough as a soldier. There is much to commend in him. He has the manner of a gentleman when he wishes to exhibit it, but nevertheless he is not a fit person to be entrusted with the future

of a lovely, pure, innocent young girl like you."

"Shame! Shame!" cried the girl.

"You may cry 'shame' upon me," he went on calmly, "and I realize, of course, that I am censurable in speaking thus of my rival."

"You flatter yourself."

"How is that?"

"You are no rival of Major Lacy's."

"No? Well, then, as a friend."

"Of his?"

"Of yours."

"Nor are you a friend of mine."

"Well, then, as an enemy, a fool, anything! I want to tell you that nothing but unhappiness awaits you if you encourage him. I know him, I tell you. I know what sort of a man he is. Unstable as water, fickle, dissipated —"

"I'll hear no more!" cried the girl, passionately, turning her head and attempting to leave the room.

"Excuse me," said the man, coolly, preventing her by occupying the doorway. "You shall hear me! And hear this first of all. I am not saying anything about Major Lacy which is not a matter of public knowledge and which I have not said to him directly, and which I would not repeat in his presence."

"You tell me that—"

"You do not believe me?"

"No."

"I beg to assure you, Miss Glen, upon my word of honor — and it has not been questioned heretofore — that I told him these very things not longer than half an hour ago. And I informed him that I intended to tell you."

"What did he say?" she asked, her curiosity getting the better of her for the moment.

"He laughed. Said that the South had a present and pressing need for such as I," he replied with sturdy honesty, "but that he would take great pleasure in killing me when the war was over if we were both spared."

"Well, sir, was not that a fine reply?"

"It was. It was a gentleman's answer. I admired him for it and told him so. At the same time I told him that he must cease his attentions to you."

"By what right did you dare —" cried the girl, almost choking with sudden and indignant protest.

"No right. Unless my love for you, with a desire to serve you, greater than everything save my devotion to that flag yonder, can excuse me."

"And that cannot. Unless love be returned, it entails no rights whatsoever."

"And you do not love me?"

"Love you!" cried the girl, scornfully.

"I know you don't, but won't you?" he pleaded.

"I won't!"

"Won't you try?"

"No!"

"You do not dislike me?"

"I hate you!"

"Do you love Lacy?"

"I will not allow you to question me!"

"You must answer me!" said the man, taking her almost savagely by the arm, and in spite of herself she thrilled at his touch.

"You hurt me," said the girl.

"Nonsense! You hurt me more than I do you. Do you love this man?"

"Why not? He has his failings, his

weaknesses, but he fights against them, he tries to overcome them. The whole South knows him, loves him for his deeds, pities him for his failings. And I —"

"Yes? You what?"

"You shall see. Meanwhile before you depreciate a brother soldier, why don't you do something yourself? You are not in the same class."

"I wouldn't say that, Miss Glen, if I were you," exclaimed Major Lacy, quietly entering the room through one of the long windows opening on the veranda. "Ah, Sempland, have you told your little tale?"

"Yes."

"Exposed me to this young lady?"

"I have."

"And condemned me as an utter scoundrel, a blackguard?"

"Not quite. I told the truth," returned

Sempland, calmly, "just as I said to you I would, and for that I am ready to answer in any way to please you. We can settle the matter when the war is over."

"Very well. What did you say, Miss Glen?" continued Lacy, turning to that young woman.

"I told him it wasn't true!" burst out the girl, impetuously.

"Ah, but it is," said Lacy, softly. "I am all that he says, and more, too."

"But look at what you have done."

"But little, after all. I heard you reproaching Sempland for what he had not done when I came in. That isn't fair. No braver man lives than Rhett Sempland. Why, did it not take courage to defy me, to tell me to my face that I was a scoundrel, a blackguard? And it took more courage to defy custom, convention, pro-

"'Ah, Sempland, have you told your little tale?'"

priety, to come here and tell you the same things. No, Miss Glen, Sempland only lacks opportunity. Fortune has not been kind to him. In that settlement after the war there will be a struggle I'll warrant you."

"See! He can speak nobly of you," cried Fanny Glen, turning reproachfully to Sempland.

"I never said he was not a gentleman, could not be a gentleman, that is, when he was — when he wished to be one, that is, as well as a brave man. He has good blood in him, but that doesn't alter the case. He isn't a fit match for you, or for any woman. I am not speaking for myself. I know my case is hopeless — "

"Gad!" laughed Lacy, "you have tried then and lost? It's my turn then. Miss Glen, you have heard the worst of me this

afternoon. I have been a drunkard, a scoundrel. I have fallen low, very low. But sometimes I am a gentleman. Perhaps in your presence I might always be. I can't tell. I'm not sure. Will you take me for your lover, and in good time your husband, under such circumstances? Faith, I'm afraid it'll not be for better, but for worse."

Sempland said nothing. He would not interfere now. Fanny Glen must answer for herself. He clenched his teeth and strove to control himself. In spite of his efforts, however, the blood flamed into his dark face. Fanny Glen grew very white, her blue eyes shone like stars in the pallor of her face under her fair hair. She hesitated. She looked from one to the other. She could not speak. She was too conscious of that stern iron figure. Yet she

would have given worlds to say "yes" to Lacy's plea.

"Choose, Miss Glen," said Lacy, at last. It was hard for him to wait for anything. "You stand between us, you see. I warn you if you do not take me, you will take Sempland. Look at him,—" he smiled satirically,—"he always gets what he wants. He is the very incarnation of bulldog tenacity and resolution. If I don't get you, he certainly will."

"How dare you comment upon me?" cried Sempland.

"Patience, my good sir," said the other, coolly. "You commented upon me in my absence. I comment upon you in your presence. The advantage is mine. As I said, Miss Glen, it is a choice between us. Do not choose me, if you should be so fatuously inclined, because I happen to have

had some chances for distinction, for I assure you, on my honor, all there is left of it, that if Sempland gets half a chance he'll do better than I. Choose because you love him — or me."

The girl stared from one to the other in indignant bewilderment. Lacy was an ideal lover. Sempland looked like a stern master, and she hated a master. She made a half step toward the handsomer and weaker man, and a half turn toward the homelier and stronger. In her heart of hearts she found in that moment which she preferred. And, as love is wayward, in the knowledge came a surprise for her — and it brought shame. Lacy was handsome and gallant and distinguished, in spite of all, but Sempland was strong — a man indeed.

"Oh!" she cried, looking at him, "if you only had done something great or — "

"What!" he cried, his face alight.

But she turned instantly away. In her words Lacy, more subtile and more used to women, read her preference and his rejection. But he smiled bravely and kindly at her in spite of his knowledge.

"Major Lacy," she said, giving him her hand, "I esteem you, I honor you, I respect you. I do not believe what this — what has been said about you. But I do not love you." She drew away from him. "You were mistaken. There is no choice between you, for I love neither of you. I do not love anybody. I hate you both!" she flashed out inconsistently. "Now go! I don't want to see either of you again."

She buried her face in her hands and burst into tears.

"I will do something to deserve your

praise," said Sempland, in his deep voice, turning away.

"Miss Glen," said Lacy, most graciously, — Fanny Glen's presence seemed to call all that was good in him to the surface, — "no one has respected me, or trusted me, or honored me as you have, for years. Sempland cannot rob me of that, even though he should win you. Good-by, and, if it be not grotesque from me, may God bless you!"

CHAPTER III

A STRIFE IN MAGNANIMITY

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"WELL, Sempland," said Lacy, with astonishing courtesy and forbearance under all the circumstances, as he overtook the other man plodding along the shaded street, "you don't seem to be in much greater favor with the young lady than I."

"Lacy," returned the other, "you did well this evening. You are not good enough for Miss Glen, I still think. Nobody is, for that matter, but you less than others. My opinion of you, you know —"

"Faith, all the world may know it apparently!"

"That's unjust. I have never mentioned

it to any one, and should not have expressed it to Miss Glen had it not been to save her. But you showed the stuff that was in you, that used to be in you, to-night. It was fine. I thank you for having said —" he paused.

"What?" asked Lacy.

"Why, that about my not having had a chance, you know."

"Oh, that was a trifle."

"I know. But not many men would have said it at the time."

"I tell you what it is, Sempland. I like you, I always have liked you. When I — er — dropped out of the old set, you know, before the war, I didn't mind giving up any one so much as you. And I was sorry for you to-night. You hadn't had a chance. God knows I love the girl, but I am not the man for her. I would break her heart in a

month. You don't know women, I take it, but I think she will be yours in the end. I give her to you."

"She is not yours to give."

"No, I know she isn't. But I withdraw in your favor."

"I don't want that sort of a fair field. Harry," went on the other man, unconsciously dropping into the familiar form of boyhood, which caused Lacy's face to flush with pleasure, "I am sure she loves you. I thought it was I, at first, but since this afternoon I have changed my mind. Why can't you be different? You are not a fit man to marry any honest woman now, and when I thought of your record I doubted that you ever would be. I was sure you would not, but — see here, old man! Throw the past aside! A fellow that's got it in him to do what you have done for the

South — why can't you control yourself? Turn over a new leaf. I love her, too. She's more to me than life itself, but her happiness is more than mine. If she loves you, and wants you, make yourself worthy of her. By heaven, I'll help you, if it kills me! You thought I was harsh to-day. I swear to you if you succeed nobody will acknowledge it quicker than I!"

"Will you tell her so?"

"I will!"

"Rhett," said the other man, stretching out his hand, "the woman I love has this day honored me, but by heaven I believe you have honored me more. I did think it was a low-down trick for you to go to Miss Glen, but I know why you did it, and you were right. It's too late. I can never be anything different. My father and grandfather both died in drunken sprees —

it's in my blood. I can't help it. I've had a chance or two to do something a little out of the ordinary in this war, thank God for it, but I suppose the reason I was able to carry it through was that I cared little whether I lived or died. No, that isn't true. I'd rather die than live, but I would like to go out of existence doing something fine and noble. I — I — might get a better chance on the other side, then, you know. Life is nothing to me, and there are no possibilities in it."

He spoke bitterly. It was rare that any one saw him in that mood.

"I tell you I'm cursed! I wouldn't take that girl if she did accept me. I only wanted to trouble you. Well, no, not exactly that, either. I love her, God knows, but the devil's got me in his grip and —"

"I can't understand it," said Sempland, vaguely.

"Of course you can't. You're so strong and so self-contained — such as you never can understand such as I. But to be a drunkard, and a gambler, and a — "

He stopped and threw up his hands, and then dropped them heavily by his side.

"It's in my blood, I tell you! It is not all my fault. Yet there is good in me, enough good to make me go mad if I stop to think of it. I want some way to get out of this life with honor. I leave the field for you."

"She doesn't love — "

"You're a fool, Sempland — forgive me — about that woman. I know women better than you. Not so much the good as the bad, but in some things women are alike, a woman is a woman whatever she

does. That girl loves the ground you walk on."

"Nonsense! It's you."

"Pshaw! She is fascinated by what she's heard on one hand, and she shuts her eyes to what she has heard on the other. The war is young. We'll be beaten, of course, but not without some hard, desperate fighting. Your chance will come, and when it does —"

"I will master it or die!"

"Of course, but don't die. Master it. Leave dying to me. I've sought ways for it, and now one is at hand."

"What is it?"

"I am going to take out the *David* to-night."

"What!"

"Yes. It's a dead secret, but I can tell you. There are three blockade-runners

ready to sail. The *Wabash* lies off the Main Ship Channel. Of course, all the others are blockaded, too, but General Beauregard thinks that if we can torpedo the flagship the others will hurry to her assistance and the blockade-runners can get out through the Swash Channel. Our magazines are running low, and we must have arms, powder, everything. There are two or three shiploads at Nassau. This is an attempt to get to them. If we can blow up Admiral Vernon's flagship, perhaps we can raise the blockade. At any rate it's the only chance for the blockade-runners to get out."

"Did the general order you to do this?"

"Certainly not. I suggested it to him. They don't order any one to the *David*, you know."

"I should say not," returned Sempland. "She's been down five times, hasn't she?"

"Yes, and every time with all of her crew."

"How many, all told, has she carried to death?"

"Some thirty or more, I believe."

"And she has never done any damage to the enemy?"

"She scraped the paint off the *New Ironsides* one night and scared her people to death, I reckon, but that's all."

"Lacy!" cried Sempland, suddenly, "I have no right to ask favors of you, but—"

"That's all right. Ask."

"Let me go to-night."

"What's the use? One officer is enough, and you could not do any good by going along. I should be in command—"

"Let me go in your place!"

"Nonsense! It's almost certain death."

"I don't care. It's my chance. I can run the thing as well as you."

"Oh, anybody can run the thing, for that matter."

"My life is of no more value to the South or to me than yours. Come! You have had your chances, and improved them; give this to me."

Lacy hesitated.

"Sempland, you're a fool, as I said before. You're running away from the woman who loves you. You're risking your life."

"Never mind about that," returned the other. "She doesn't love me, and I want to do it. For God's sake, old man, don't be selfish! Let me have an opportunity!"

Sempland was ordinarily a reticent and a quiet man, but this possibility awoke him into action. He pleaded so long and so

hard, and so determinedly that he overbore the other man, and finally wrung from him a grudging assent to his request.

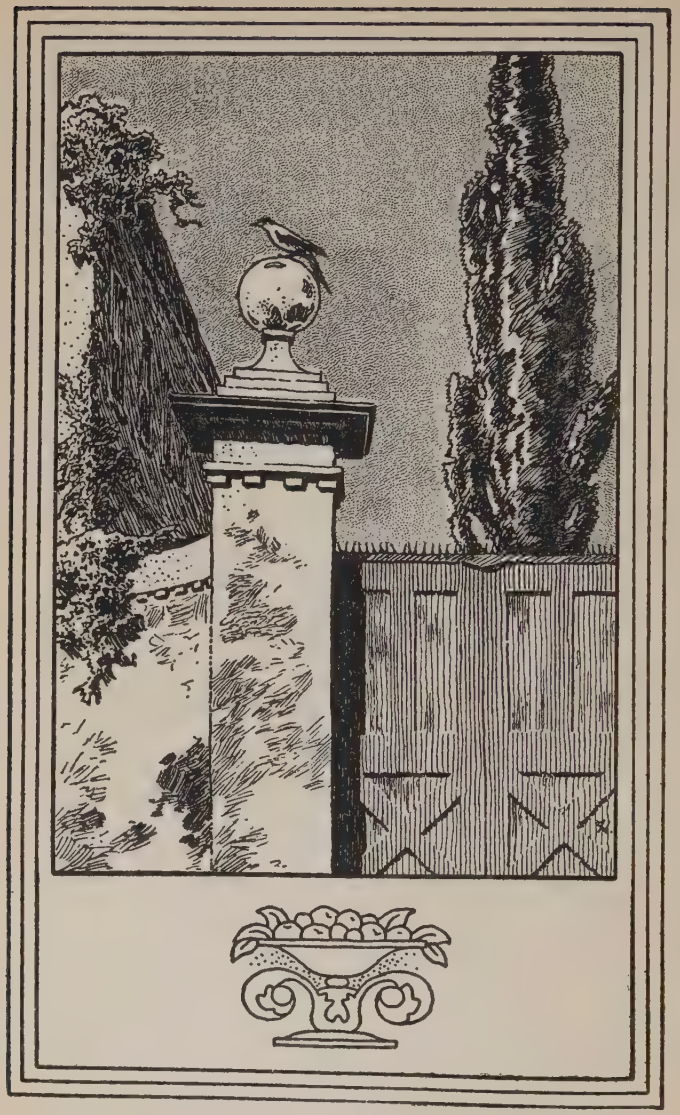
"If the general is willing, I'll give you my chance."

"Thank you. God bless you! If I don't come back, remember that you're to make a man of yourself — for her."

"You will come back. You must come back!"

CHAPTER IV

OPPORTUNITIES EMBRACED



CHAPTER IV

OPPORTUNITIES EMBRACED

"General Beauregard," said Lacy, as the two young officers were ushered into the general's office, "I have a most unusual request to make of you, sir."

"What is it, Major Lacy?" returned the little general.

"I want you to relieve me of the duty of taking out the *David* to-night, sir."

"What!"

"I want you to give it to Mr. Sempland here."

"You wish to avoid the danger?" queried Beauregard, gazing intently at Lacy.

"He does it as a favor to me, General,"

interrupted Sempland. "He has had his chance, and I have had none. I begged and implored him to allow me to go, and only wrung a most reluctant consent from him."

The general turned his head away, his fingers tapped softly on the desk.

"Things have not gone as we wished," he murmured half to himself, "the South is hard pushed, indeed. The war has dragged on. It becomes harder and harder, but we may not despair for our beloved country when her sons strive for posts of danger and are emulous to die in her service. Do you know what this means, Mr. Sempland?"

"What it means, General?"

"There is about one chance in a thousand of your coming back. Every time that infernal submarine has been used she has done no damage to the enemy and has drowned her crew. Payne was drowned in her with

eight men when she was first sent out. She was swamped by the wash of a passing steamer on her next trial, and all hands were lost. Then she sank at Fort Sumter wharf, carrying down six of her men. Hundley took her into the Stono River and made a dive with her, hit mud, stuck there, and every soul was suffocated. They raised her and fixed her up again and tried her once more in the harbor here. She worked beautifully for a while, but fouled the cable of the receiving ship trying to pass under her keel, and stayed there. She has just been raised, the dead cleared out of her, now you want to go on her again."

"I do, sir," returned Sempland.

"Is life worth so little to you that you are willing to sacrifice it?"

"There is Lacy, sir."

"Oh, he is different!" burst out the

general, and then bit his lip. "It would be greatly to Lacy's credit," had flashed into his mind, "if he could manage to die in some such heroic action."

Lacy and Sempland knew what the general thought, and Sempland could think of no words to bridge over the pause.

"You see," at last said Lacy, smiling satirically at Sempland, "the general understands. You would better let me go."

"No. The thing sometimes works. Glassell got out alive when he tried to blow up the *New Ironsides*, and anyway, I want this chance. I have had four years of war and have spent three of it in prison. For God's sake, General —"

"Very well. You shall have it," answered Beauregard, "but I will not have

the boat used as a submarine. You can sink her until her hatch is awash, but no lower."

"Thank you," answered the delighted Sempland; "where shall I get a crew?"

"One has already been selected from among hundreds who volunteered. Five seamen are to attend to the propeller and an artillery officer to look after the torpedo. You can steer the boat?"

"I lived on the water before I entered the army."

"All right. The *Wabash* is lying off the Main Ship Channel. I have no instructions to give you except to go at her and sink her. I am told the most vulnerable spot of a ship is just forward of the mainmast. Hit her there. Don't explode your torpedo until you are in actual contact if possible. Glassell's went off the

moment he saw her without touching, else he would have sunk the *New Ironsides*. You will find the torpedo boat at the government wharf. Everything is ready. You will leave at seven. The three blockade-runners will follow you as close as is practicable, and when you torpedo the frigate they will dart through the Swash and try to get to sea. I reckon upon the other Yankee ships running down to aid the *Wabash*. I'll see you on the wharf. God bless you, and may He have mercy on your souls!" said the little general, solemnly.

He put out his hand to the young man, and Sempland shook it vigorously.

"I pray that I may succeed for the sake of the South, sir," returned the young man, firmly.

"For the sake of the South, gentlemen.

That is our watchword," cried Beauregard, standing up and bringing his hand to a salute.

"Have you any preparations to make, Sempland?" asked Lacy, when they left the office.

"I have a letter to write."

"Very well. I will look after the boat and will meet you on the wharf. Shall you see Miss Glen before you go?"

"No."

"You must."

"I cannot. What difference does it make to her, anyway? I will be at the wharf" — he looked at his watch, it was already six o'clock — "in three-quarters of an hour. Good-by."

The two men shook hands and separated.

"The boat is ready," said Lacy to himself. "I saw to that this afternoon. There

is nothing for me to do there. I wonder — by Jove, I'll do it!"

A few minutes after he was ushered again into the presence of Miss Fanny Glen. She had at first pleaded indisposition, but he had insisted upon seeing her.

"I have something of so much importance to tell you, Miss Glen," he began, as she entered the room, "that I was forced to override your desires."

"Is it about the subject that we — I — talked about this afternoon? If so — "

"It is not. I shall say no more on that score. I had my answer then."

"I am very sorry," continued the girl. "I admire you, respect you, but — but — I do not — "

"I understand. Never mind that. You said that Sempland had never done any-

thing to distinguish himself. Well, he's going to do it to-night."

"What is he going to do?" asked the girl, all the listlessness instantly going out of her manner.

"He is going to take out the *David*."

"Yes?"

"And blow up the *Wabash*."

Her hand went to her heart. Her face turned whiter than the frock she wore.

"My God!" she whispered, "Admiral Vernon's ship!"

"She loves him! She loves him!" flashed into Lacy's mind, and for the moment he suffered agonies of jealous pain.

"But," continued the girl, "why should they —"

"In the first place," went on Lacy, "if the venture succeeds, we sink a noble ship and put out of the way a most determined

enemy, and we hope to let the blockaded cotton ships get to sea."

"But the *David!*" said the girl, who knew the sinister story of the crazy submarine torpedo boat as did every one in Charleston. "It is sure death!"

"It is dangerous," said Lacy, softly, "but General Beauregard has ordered Sempland to keep her on the surface. That ought to give them a chance. Glassell escaped, you remember, when he tried the *New Ironsides*."

"He will be killed! He will be killed!" she cried piteously, "and — Admiral Vernon!"

"What is the Yankee admiral to you, to any of us?" Lacy asked, curiously interested to know the meaning of her remark.

"Why do you tell me of all this?"

she asked, failing to notice his question in her anxiety and alarm.

"Because I want you to know Sempland as the hero he is, and because — forgive my frankness — I believe that you love him. So I want him to hear you say it before he goes out. It will double his chances of escape if he has your love to think of. You will inspire him to come back. As it is now, I am afraid he does not especially care to. He's too good a man to lose, if we — if you — can save him, Miss Fanny."

"And this man abused you to me this afternoon!" murmured the girl.

"He said what was true. I honor him for it. I love you, Miss Fanny. I am proving it to you now as I proved it to him when I gave him my place at his earnest entreaty. The detail was mine."

"Why did you do it?"

"For his sake, for yours. It's his solitary chance. I've had so many, you know."

"And he is going to blow up the *Wabash*, the admiral's ship, did you say?"

"Yes, if he can."

Fanny Glen was a picture of terror plainly apparent in spite of her valiant effort to conceal her feelings. Her agitation was so overwhelming, her anxiety so pronounced, that even on the hypothesis of an ardent affection for Sempland, Lacy was completely at loss to account for her condition. What could it mean? But he had no time to speculate upon it. The minutes were flying by.

"Come, Miss Glen," he said at last, "it isn't so bad as all that."

"But those men on the ship, the — the

admiral! They won't have a chance for their lives. It is appalling to think of! I cannot bear it! I —"

"Let them lift the blockade then," coolly returned the young officer; "it is a chance of war. Don't waste your sympathy on them. Bestow it nearer at hand. Sempland starts in half an hour. Won't you see him before he goes?"

"Yes," whispered the girl, "if you will send him to me."

"There is no time to lose. I will have him here in a few moments."

As he turned away the girl stretched out her hand to him.

"You have been very good — very brave — very noble," she faltered. "I wish — I — I loved you more than — than I do."

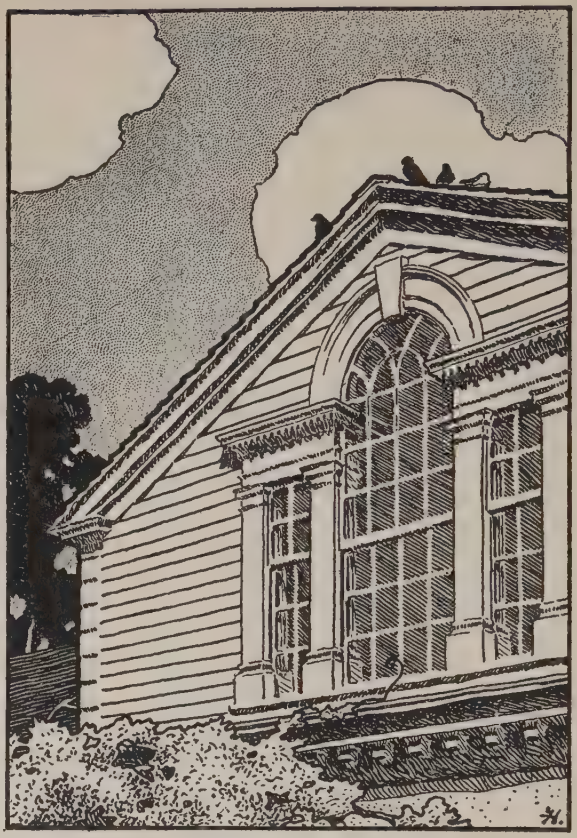
He stooped over her and kissed her

bended head. She was a little woman and so appealing. He breathed a prayer over her and tore himself away.

"Thank you," he said, "you have rewarded me. Good-by."

CHAPTER V

WHAT HAPPENED IN THE STRONG ROOM



CHAPTER V

WHAT HAPPENED IN THE STRONG ROOM

As she heard his departing footstep on the porch the poor girl threw herself down upon her knees and lifted her hands.

"The South and — and — he, mistaken, but still — ah, where is my duty? The ship and Rhett Sempland! I love him. I cannot let him go! It would be wicked. God pity me! But how, how to prevent it? If I can only delay him until to-morrow, I can tell the general everything, and — is there a way, is there a way, O God?"

She thought deeply, every atom in her being concentrated on the problem which tore her between love and duty, devotion

to the cause of the South and those other appeals, which, finding lodgment in her heart, moved her so profoundly. She wrestled with the question as to where her duty lay as Jacob wrestled with the angel of old, and if she did not conquer, at least she decided.

Determining on a desperate course of action, she rose to her feet and sharply struck a bell by her side on the table. The house was an ancient mansion when it had been rented by her aunt and herself three years before. It dated back to Colonial times. There was a strong room in it, the windows of which were barred. It would make a safe prison for any one. He should be put in there and be kept there until morning. He would be safe there. No harm would come to the ship, and when the general knew, he

would forgive her. She would tell him the first thing in the morning.

It would cause her lover pain and grief, this summary action of hers, but she could explain it to him, too; and he would forgive her also and she would reward him with herself! There was compensation in that, she thought proudly and tenderly.

"Cæsar," she said, as the aged butler made his appearance in response to the bell, "send Joe and Sam and Cato to me. Boys," she continued, as three stalwart young negroes presented themselves before her soon after, "Mr. Sempland is coming here to-night to see me. I — he —" she found it somewhat difficult to explain. "General Beauregard wants him detained here. I cannot let him get away. Show him into the strong room on the other side of the house when he asks for me, and then

lock the door on him. Don't let him get out under any circumstances until to-morrow, but on no account are you to do him any hurt. You hear? You understand?"

"Ya-as, Miss Fanny, I specs we does," answered Cato, the oldest and most intelligent of the three.

"Cæsar, you lead him into the strong room. Say I will meet him there in a moment. He won't suspect anything, I reckon. The rest of you stay in the passage, and as soon as he enters lock the door upon him. Don't neglect that! He'll try to get out. He may break the door down. But you must keep him there, even if he attempts to kill you — unless I say for you to release him."

The three slaves were devoted to their young mistress and, accepting her orders without a question, they at once began their

preparations to carry them out. As they were talking together a light step sounded on the porch. There was a ring at the door. The men hurried to their places of concealment. Miss Fanny Glen hid in the dark drawing-room, as Cæsar shuffled along the hall to the front door.

"Your mistress has sent for me," said Sempland. And from where she stood in the drawing-room, Fanny Glen's heart leaped at the tones of his voice.

"Yas, suh," returned the darky, obsequiously ushering him through the hall. "Step right dis way, suh, Mass' Sempland. Miss Fanny done axes you to go in dis room at de end ob de passage, suh. An' she tol' me she gwine be wid you in a minute, suh."

The room was one which Sempland had never entered before. It was small, fur-

nished like a library or office, with several large closets and an old iron safe, and had two grated windows and one heavy mahogany door. It had formerly been used as an office and as a treasure room. Seeing the visitor safe within, Cæsar calmly withdrew, and as he adroitly coughed violently in the passage Sempland did not hear the ponderous key turning in the old-fashioned lock. He waited a few minutes, and then, as time was precious, he looked around for a bell. Seeing none he walked to the door, laid his hand upon the knob, and tried to open it. It did not give.

"Locked!" he muttered in surprise.

Raising his hand he struck a light blow on the panels, but there was no reply. Then he called out and received no answer. He struck and called again and again, his voice rising to a shout while his hands were

bleeding from the blows he had rained on the hard surface. Finally a voice came to him faintly through the door.

"W'at's de matta, suh?"

"Open this door instantly, you black dog! Where is Miss Glen?"

"She's a-comin', suh."

"I wish to see her immediately!" he cried imperiously, kicking and battering again upon the door in furious rage, which was stilled the instant he heard her voice outside.

"Mr. Sempland?"

"What is the meaning of this action, this outrage, Miss Glen?" he cried. "You sent for me. I came. Why am I locked in here? Open the door! I must leave immediately!"

"You are locked in here by my orders, Mr. Sempland," said Fanny Glen, nervously.

"Impossible! For what reason?"

"Because I — I —"

"By heavens, this is maddening! You don't know what you do! I am ordered to-night on a hazardous expedition. I must be at my post in ten minutes. Let me out instantly!"

"I know," returned the girl.

"Well, then, why don't you open this door? I will say nothing of this —"

"I cannot."

"Why not?"

"I — I — do not wish you to go out on the *David*."

"What is it to you? How dare you interfere? You said I had done nothing but lie in prison," he replied. "I will show you to-night."

"Not to-night."

"This is madness! Think what you are doing!"

"I can't help it."

"Why not?"

"Because I — I —"

"In God's name, what do you mean?"

"I will not have you take the risk. It is certain death to you, and the admiral's ship —" said the girl, so softly that he could scarce hear her. "You will forgive me when you understand. I shall release you to-morrow. Mercy! Have pity on me, I am almost crazy!"

"Do you know that you will dishonor me? If you care, let me go."

"There is another reason. I will not have the *Wabash* blown up. There is a — a —"

"Another man?" shouted Sempland. "You are a coquette! Let me out, I say! I will get out! My God, was ever a man in such a situation?"

He beat and hammered on the massive door until his bruised hands bled again. He shook it in its frame like a madman. He was exhausted by the violence of his efforts and of his passion. Through it all the girl stood in the hall frightened nearly to death. What mad scheme had she entered upon? Had she strength enough to carry it through? The three servants were terrified also, their eyes rolling in their sockets, their hands nervously fingering their weapons. Suddenly another voice, Cæsar's, broke through the turmoil, reaching even the ear of the desperate man on the other side of the heavy mahogany door. He stopped to listen.

"Miss Fanny," said the butler, "dah's a sojah man at de do', an' he wants to know if Mass' Semplan' is heah."

"Tell him, no," said Fanny Glen, resolutely. "Say he left a half-hour ago."

"My God!" groaned Sempland. "I am a disgraced and ruined man! Listen to me, Fanny Glen! I swear to you, on my honor as a gentleman, if you do not instantly open this door I'll blow my brains out in this room!"

"Oh, you wouldn't do that?"

"I will, so help me God!"

There was conviction in his voice. The girl listening in the passage heard the click of a raised revolver hammer.

"Don't!" she cried in greater terror than ever, "I will open!"

He heard a brief whispered consultation, the key was turned in the lock, and the door was suddenly flung open. Sempland darted toward it on the instant and recoiled from the terrible figure of the little woman barring him with outstretched arms. If he had suffered within, she had suffered without the

room. Such a look of mortal agony and anguish he had never seen on any human face. She trembled violently before him. Yet she was resolute not to give way, determined to keep the door. Clustered at her back were the three trembling negroes armed one with a knife, another with a pistol, another with a stout club. He would have swept them out of his path in an instant had it not been for the girl. She stood before him with outstretched arms, her attitude a mixture of defiance and appeal.

"It is too late," she said, "you were to go at seven. It is past that now. Saved, saved!"

He could do her no violence, that was certain. He stood silent before her, his head bent toward the floor, thinking deeply. Her heart went out to him then, her soul

"The door was suddenly flung open."

yearned to him. She had hurt him, he must hate her — and she loved him.

"Will you not come in and speak to me for a moment?" he asked her quietly enough at last.

She signed to the men, stepped forward, the door was closed, and locked behind her, and they were alone.

"Did you think to be of service to me?" he burst out, as she drew near and then paused irresolute, miserable. "You have ruined me for life! I begged that detail. I volunteered. I must get out! They may wait for me. It may not be too late. For God's sake unlock that door!"

She shook her head, she could not trust herself to speak.

"I don't understand you. If it is — love — for me —"

She stared at him beseechingly, mute ap-

peal for mercy, for help, in her lovely eyes.

"You are condemning me to death, to worse than death. I am going!"

"You cannot!"

She came nearer as she spoke. Suddenly he seized her, drew her close to him, held her with his left arm, and there was happiness for her in his touch. She was as a child before his strength. With his right hand he presented his pistol to her temple. He took advantage of her weakness, but only in the service of a higher cause than love of woman, in answer to a greater demand than even she could make. She offered no resistance either. What was the use?

"Boys!" he called out sharply. "Are you there?"

"Yas, suh," answered Cato.

"I have your mistress in my arms, my pistol is at her head. If you do not instantly open the door, I shall kill her where I stand!"

"Cato, I forbid you to open!" cried Fanny Glen, in a ringing voice, still making no effort to struggle and looking up into the infuriated man's face with the expression of a martyr and an angel. He saw and recognized, but persisted; it was his only way.

"Open instantly!" he said again, "unless you would see your mistress die!"

That was a threat the men could not resist. In a second the door was opened. The awe-struck faces of the blacks peered into the room.

"Throw down your arms, here at my feet, you black hounds!" shouted Sempland. "Quick! Or I fire!"

Instantly knife, pistol, and bludgeon clattered on the floor at his feet.

"Out of the way now! Leave the hall! I want a clear passage!"

"Kill me! Kill me!" cried the girl, "and have done!"

He released her in a moment.

"You have dishonored me," he cried. "I fear it is too late. I wouldn't hurt a hair of your head. But I love you, I love you!"

He strained her to his breast, pressing a passionate, burning kiss upon her lips. He wasted a few precious seconds, but he could not help it. She threw her arms about his neck and returned his kiss. He could feel her heart beating against his own.

"I cannot let you go!" she cried. "Stay with me and I am yours!"

"I must go!"

He tore himself from her and ran down the passage into the street. She thought she would have fainted at that instant, but something — suspense, the faint possibility of success, doubt — nerved her to action. After a few moments of awful uncertainty she followed Sempland along the hallway, out through the door, and into the night. He was not to be seen. She knew where he had gone, however, and she bent her steps toward the government wharf. She went slowly at first, but finally ran at her greatest speed.

CHAPTER VI

AN ENGINE OF DESTRUCTION

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THE *David*, so named because although she was small it was hoped she would strike terror to the huge Goliaths of the Union fleet, was built of boiler iron. She was thirty feet long and of a cigar shape, her greatest diameter being a little less than six feet. She was propelled by a hand engine worked by members of her crew, and could be submerged at pleasure, but experience had shown that once down she usually stayed down with all on board. A résumé of her history has been given. She was a floating, or sinking, death-trap.

Originally she was intended to drag after

her a floating torpedo in the hope that she could pass under a vessel's keel and explode the torpedo when she reached the proper position. General Beauregard, however, had positively forbidden that she should be used as a submarine any longer on account of her disastrous behavior, and on this occasion she was provided with a long spar sticking out from her nose, on the end of which was one hundred pounds of powder in a copper cylinder provided with four extremely sensitive tubes of lead containing a highly explosive mixture, which would ignite upon contact with a ship's side or bottom and explode the torpedo.

She was painted a slate-gray, and her ballast was so adjusted that with the seven men who manned her on board, one to steer, one to look after the torpedo, and five to turn the propeller crank, her low hatch scarcely

rose above the water. In that condition, and especially at night, she looked like a plank floating on the surface. By hard and conscientious labor her five man-power engine could shove her along at about a speed of four knots. Although the order of General Beauregard that she should not be submerged again had materially diminished the risk which experience had shown was overwhelming, yet the proposed expedition was nevertheless hazardous in the extreme.

In the first place, an excellent lookout was kept on the Union ships on account of the several attempts which had been made against them by similar boats. If she were discovered, one shot striking the boat as she approached, even a rifle shot, would suffice to sink her. No one knew what she would do even if she succeeded in exploding the torpedo. It was scarcely hoped that she

could get away from a sinking ship in that event.

The little party of officers grouped on the wharf bade good-by to the men who entered the deadly affair as if they were saying farewell to those about to die. Every preparation had been made, the artillery officer had finally and carefully inspected the torpedo to see if it was in good working order, the men had descended into the cramped narrow little hull of the boat and had made ready to start the propeller. None of them wore any superfluous clothing, for it was oppressively hot in the confined area of the little iron shell, and they might have to swim for their lives anyway — perhaps they would be lucky if they got the chance. In short, everybody was ready and every one was there except the commander of the expedition.

Great secrecy had been observed in the preparations lest there might be a spy in the town, who, learning of the attempt, would communicate the valuable information to the Federal fleet, and so frustrate it. General Beauregard had caused the wharf to be cleared and guarded early in the evening. It was quite dark in February at six o'clock, and no one except his trusted staff officers and Lacy, who had so magnanimously surrendered his opportunity to Sempland, was present.

At a quarter before seven, which was the time Sempland had appointed to return when he left in obedience to Fanny Glen's summons, the general began to feel some uneasiness. He spoke about it to Lacy, but was reassured by that gentleman, who professed full confidence that the young lieutenant would undoubtedly be there

in a few moments. He had already of his own motion despatched a soldier to Fanny Glen's house and had learned from him the false news that Sempland had been there and had left. Lacy supposed he had returned to his quarters.

The state of the tide, the necessities of the blockade-runners who hoped to escape that night under cover of the confusion caused by the attack, rendered it absolutely necessary that there should be no delay in the departure of the torpedo boat. The time had been set for seven o'clock, as late as practicable, in order to secure the advantage of settled darkness before the blow was delivered. The party on the wharf waited apprehensively a little longer, conversing in low tones as the moments ran away, and there was great anxiety as to the whereabouts of the missing officer. Seven o'clock

struck from the ancient church steeple hard by; still he did not appear.

"General," said Lacy, a few moments later, "if I might suggest, sir—"

"Go on. What is it?"

"It might be well to send for him."

"Never!" said the general, shortly; "it is a soldier's duty to be at the place appointed him at the specified time. I shall not send for him. If he has forgotten himself, his duty, for any cause, he shall suffer the consequences."

Lacy was in despair. He could not understand the situation. He had not the slightest doubt of Sempland's courage. He knew his friend's rigid idea of soldierly duty or honor. Where had he gone? If there had been any way, he would have despatched men to hunt for him in every direction, but the general's prohibition was

positive. And for some reason which he could not explain he refrained from saying anything about Sempland's visit to Fanny Glen, merely advising the general, in response to an inquiry, that he had left him to go to his quarters to write a letter.

Five minutes more dragged along.

"General Beauregard," said Lacy at last, "with your permission I will seek him myself."

"No," said the general, sternly, "we can wait no longer. I need you for something else."

"You mean —?"

"I mean that I shall carry out the original plan. Mr. Sempland has forfeited any consideration whatever at our hands."

"Then I am to —?"

Lacy pointed toward the *David*.

"Unless you wish to back out."

"No one has ever used these words to me, sir," answered Lacy, proudly. "I am as ready, as anxious, to go as I ever was. But Sempland — sir, I would stake my life on his fidelity."

"It may be so. I can wait no longer. Will you go, or shall I give up the expedition?"

"Rather than that, sir," said one of his staff officers, "if Major Lacy hesitates, let me go."

"Enough!" said Lacy. "Will you explain to Sempland how it came about? Good-by."

CHAPTER VII

THE HOUR AND THE MAN

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THE HOUR AND THE MAN

Lacy tore off his coat and vest, and threw them on the wharf, saluted the general and stepped into the boat. Some one in the group lifted a lantern. The flickering light fell on the pale faces of the determined men.

"Good-by, sir," said Beauregard. "You, at least, are an officer, a soldier of whom the South is proud. Remember the flagship is your game. She lies at anchor right off the Main Ship Channel. Good luck to you. A colonel's shoulder straps await you here if you come back. God bless you all!"

He wrung the major's hand, watched him step into the *David* and whisper an order to his men, heard him call out "Good-by, sir. If we don't come back, don't forget us," and that was all.

The little boat was shoved away from the wharf by willing hands and in a moment was lost in the darkness of the bay. There was no moon, and the night was dark. There was no light save from the stars. The torpedo boat slipped through the water without making a sound. She became entirely invisible a hundred feet away. The officers rubbed their eyes as they stared in the direction where they had last seen her, almost fearing that she had again sunk beneath the sea. They stayed there perhaps five minutes, at least until the blockade-runners, none of them showing a light of

any description, could get under way in obedience to a lantern signal from the general and noiselessly slip down the bay in the wake of the frail little craft which it was hoped would be able to clear the path for them.

"Now," said Beauregard, turning away at last, "for Mr. Sempland. I do not understand it. I never thought him a coward."

"Nor am I, sir!" panted a voice out of the darkness, as a pale and breathless man burst through the group surrounding the general.

"Mr. Sempland!"

"For God's sake, sir, am I in time? The boat?"

"Gone."

"How long? Call her back!"

"It is too late. She has been gone ten minutes. Where were you, sir?"

"Who took her out?"

"Major Lacy. Answer my question, sir!"

"He! My God! I am disgraced! Dishonored! And she—"

"Where were you, sir?"

"I—I—"

The young man hesitated.

"Why don't you answer? Do you realize your position? You begged this detail. Why were you not here?"

"Oh, General Beauregard—"

"How could you forget your honor, the South? Where were you, I say? Answer, or I will have you shot in the morning!"

"I—I—was detained, sir. I—"

"Is that your only excuse, sir?" sternly.

Sempland was in a fearful predicament.

To have restrained him by force was an act of high treason. He could only explain himself by implicating the woman he loved. The consequences in either case were dreadful. Fanny Glen a traitor to the South? Beauregard was a stern, inexorable soldier. He would not condone such an offence as hers. That she had failed in her effort to prevent the expedition would mean nothing to the general. Fanny Glen, the pride of Charleston, the woman who had done more for the South than any other woman in the Carolinas, perhaps, to be disgraced, certainly to be punished, it might be — shot!

She had ruined him, but he had kissed her. He could not say the word which would incriminate her and leave him free. He was disgraced already, he would be

cashiered. Well, what mattered it? His chance was gone, the woman did not love him. His heart was hot against her. Yet he remembered the scene in the strong room — had she indeed returned his kiss? He closed his lips firmly and said nothing. He would not, he could not betray her, even to himself.

"You do not answer, sir! What excuse have you to offer?"

"None."

"You sought this detail. You forced yourself into the expedition. Have you nothing to say for yourself?"

"Nothing."

"You are under arrest, sir, for disobedience of orders, for dereliction of duty! By heavens!" said the general, striking his left hand with his right, "for cowardice!"

"For God's sake, not that, sir!"

"For cowardice, sir! You knew the expedition was one of extreme hazard. You have no excuse to offer for not having been here. What else is it?"

"Not that, sir! Not that!" pleaded the lieutenant. "Anything but that!"

"A traitor, a coward, I say!"

"General Beauregard!" cried a high-pitched voice out of the darkness, shrill and unnatural with terror and fatigue. The next moment Fanny Glen herself, bareheaded, panting from her rapid run, white-faced in the light cast by the lantern held by the staff officer, pushed through the group surrounding the general.

"Where is Mr. Sempland, sir?" she asked.

"Here, under arrest. He failed to arrive in time. Can you explain it?"

"The boat?"

"Gone."

"Gone? Then who—"

"Major Lacy took it out."

"And the *Wabash?*"

"Will be blown up, please God, if all goes well."

The girl put her face in her hands as if to shut out some dreadful picture. She kept them there for a few seconds, then she lifted her head and looked unsteadily from the severe face of the general to the cold, disdainful countenance of Sempland. The man she loved shrank away from her.

"Useless! Too late!" she murmured, then fell fainting at their feet.

CHAPTER VIII

DEATH OUT OF THE DEEP

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At 8.30 that night, February 17, 1864, the little torpedo boat, after having successfully passed the monitors and ironclads anchored just out of range of Fort Sumter, and inside the shoals at the harbor mouth, was stopped about a mile from the outer entrance of the Main Ship Channel, where her quarry had been reported as lying quietly at anchor at nightfall. Success had attended the efforts of her devoted crew so far. By Lacy's command the *David* was stopped in order to give a little rest, a breathing space, before the last dash at their prey, to the

weary seamen who had driven her steadily on since leaving the wharf.

The night was calm and very still. The hatch covers were thrown back, the tired men thrust their heads into the cool, sweet air, so refreshing after the closeness of their badly ventilated vessel, and wetted their fevered, exhausted bodies with the stimulating water of the bay. The artillery officer took advantage of the opportunity to make a careful reëxamination of the torpedo, and Lacy was greatly relieved when he reported that he had everything in good working order, so far as he was able to judge. The young commander of the expedition was the more anxious for success because of the previous failures of similar endeavors. After a ten-minute rest he gave the order to get under way.

"Men," he said coolly, "you know the

history of this boat. There's a chance, ay, more than a chance, that none of us will ever come back from this expedition. You knew all that when you volunteered. If we do get out alive, our country will reward us. If we do not, she will not forget us. Shake hands, now. Good-by, and God bless you. Put every pound of muscle you have into that crank when we get within one hundred yards of the frigate, and jump the boat into her. I'll give the signal. I want to strike her hard."

"Ay, ay, sir," replied the seamen as cheerfully as if there was only a frolic before them. "We'll do our best. Good-by, and God bless you, sir. We're proud to serve under you whatever comes."

"Thank you. All ready with the torpedo, Captain?"

"Yes, Major Lacy."

"Good! Down everybody, now! Clap to the hatch covers and start the cranks. Easy at first, and when I give the word — hard!"

He seized the spokes of the steering wheel in his steady hands as he spoke. Back of him, to relieve him in case of accident, stood Captain Carlson, the artillery officer. The heavy planks were drawn over the open hatch, locked, and bolted. Silently the men manned the cranks. The little engine of destruction gathered way. It was pitch dark, and very close and hot. There was no sound in the shell save the slight creaking of the cranks and the deep breathing of the crew as they toiled over them.

Forward by the wheel there was a glass hood, which permitted the men who steered to direct the course of the boat. As the sinister sea demon stole through the waters, Lacy caught a sudden glimpse at last of the

spars of a heavy ship at anchor before him. The night had cleared somewhat, and although there was no moon, the stars gave sufficient light for him to see the black tracery of masts and yards lifting themselves above the horizon.

How still the looming ship lay. There was scarcely sea enough to tremble the top-hamper of the unsuspecting man-of-war. A faint film of smoke falling lazily from her funnel in the quiet air, with her riding and side-lights, were the only signs of life about her. No more peaceful-looking object floated over the ocean apparently.

"It would be a pity," reflected the man at the wheel for an instant, "to strike her so." But the thought vanished so soon as it had been formulated. His heart leaped in his breast like the hound when he launches himself in that last spring which

hurls him on his quarry. Another moment —a few more seconds —

"That will be our game," whispered Lacy to the artillery captain, in a voice in which his feelings spoke.

"Yes."

They were slowly approaching nearer. The bearings of the cranks and screws had been well oiled, and the *David* slipped through the water without a sound. She was so nearly submerged that she scarcely rippled the surface of the sea. There was no white line of foam to betray her movement through the black water. It was almost impossible for any one to detect the approach of the silent terror. There was nothing showing above water except the flat hatch cover, and that to an unpractised eye looked much like a drifting plank.

Yet there were sharp eyes on the ship, and

no negligent watch was kept either. When the *David* was perhaps two hundred feet away, she was seen. The steadiness of her movement proclaimed a thing intelligently driven.

A sharp, sudden cry from the forecastle ahead of them rang through the night. It was so loud and so fraught with alarm that it came in a muffled note to the men in the depths of the torpedo boat. A bugle call rang out, a drum was beaten. The erstwhile silent ship was filled with tumult and clamor.

"They have seen us!" said Lacy. "Ahead!" he cried, hoarsely. "Hard!"

At the same instant the chain cable of the vessel was slipped, bells jangled in her depths, the mighty engines clanked into sudden motion, the screws revolved, and she began slowly to drive astern. But it was too late, the sea devil was too near to be

balked of the prey. The men at the cranks of the *David*, working with superhuman energy, fairly hurled the torpedo boat upon the doomed ship. Lacy had time for a single upward glance — his last look at anything! The black railing towering above his head was swarming with men. Flashes of light punctured the darkness. Bullets pattered like rain on the iron. One or two tore through the flimsy shell. A jet of water struck him in the face.

The next second there was a terrific concussion. The torpedo struck the ship just forward the mainmast and exploded, tearing a great hole in the side, extending far below the water-line. In the blaze of light that followed, the men in the *David* cheered wildly, and the next moment blackness overwhelmed them.

On the frigate there was the wildest con-

fusion as the sleeping men below came swarming up on deck. Some of them never succeeded in reaching the hatchways and were drowned where they slept. Some were killed by the explosion. The officers, however, quickly restored order, and as a last resort ordered the surviving men into the rigging, for the water where she lay was shallow, and there they could find safety.

The ship was hopelessly lost. Indeed, she began to sink so soon as the torpedo exploded. The water poured into her vitals, and soon the crash of exploding boilers and the hiss of escaping steam added their quota to the confusion.

Some of the cooler among the officers and men lingered on the decks, small arms in hand, searching the sea on every hand, until the decks were awash. They were looking and hoping for a chance at the boat which

had caused them such a terrible disaster, but they never saw her. She had disappeared.

Signals had been burned instantly on the shattered ship. Far up and down the line the lights of moving vessels burning answering signals showed that they were alert to render assistance. Boats, ships' cutters, dashed alongside to render help, and they, too, sought the torpedo boat, but in vain. She was not to be found.

At the same time the ships of the fleet did not move from their appointed stations, and when the blockade-runners came dashing down through the Swash Channel in the hope that the vessels usually stationed there would be withdrawn in the excitement, they were met by a deadly fire from the rifled guns, which rendered it impossible for them to proceed. They turned tail and fled. Two of them succeeded in returning to the

harbor. One of them never came back. She was set on fire and burned by the shells of the ships. The monitors and ironclads joined in the battle, the forts returned the fire, and the quiet night was filled with the noise of roaring cannon and exploding shell.

Lacy's had been a gallant and heroic attempt. It had succeeded as to the blowing up of a Federal warship, but it had failed otherwise. By a singular freak of fortune the blow had not fallen upon the vessel for which it had been intended. After dark the fine new sloop-of-war *Housatonic* had replaced the *Wabash* off the Main Ship Channel, and she had suffered instead of the flagship.

Although when day broke she was sought for again, nothing more was seen of the *David*. At least not then. With the explosion of the torpedo she had vanished

from the face of the waters. For a long time General Beauregard and the people in Charleston waited for tidings of her, but it was not until the war was over and the *Housatonic* was raised that the mystery was solved. They found the torpedo boat with her nose pointed toward the hole she had torn in the side of the ship, about a hundred feet away from the wrecked sloop-of-war. She had been riddled with bullets and shattered by the explosion of her own torpedo. She was, of course, filled with water, and in her, at their stations, they found the bodies of her devoted crew, Lacy with his hand on the wheel.

Nothing in life had so become Lacy as the ending of it. It is a proverb that the good men do lies buried with them, the evil is long remembered. It was not so in his case, at any rate, for men forgot everything

but the dauntless heroism with which he had laid down his life for his country, and assured his fame.

And, after all, he was not to be pitied for that he died the death of his choice.

CHAPTER IX

MISERABLE PAIR AND MISERABLE NIGHT

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SEMPLAND's mind was in a fearful turmoil. It had all come so suddenly and unexpectedly upon him that as yet he hardly realized the gravity of his situation, although it could scarcely be worse. He was under arrest and in confinement, facing such serious charges as neglect of duty, disobedience of orders, treason, cowardice! As to these last, he was so conscious of his loyalty and intrepidity that they did not worry him so much as they might have done. The other things were bad enough, but surely, surely, no one could ever believe him either a traitor or a coward!

His mind did not dwell on his own situation as it might have done, either, if it had not been for Fanny Glen. Instinctively he had stepped forward to gather her in his arms when she fainted before him on the wharf that night, but he had been sternly waved back by the general, and without being given a chance to learn anything about her condition he had been hurried to headquarters and heavily guarded in the room where he was to be held pending Beauregard's further pleasure. As for Fanny Glen, although Sempland could not know it, the surgeon who had been present had speedily revived that young woman, a carriage had been summoned, and she had been taken home under the escort of one of the staff officers.

Sempland was utterly unable to fathom her mysterious conduct. He had thought

upon it swiftly as he could during those trying moments which had been so filled with action, but he had not had time, until in the quiet and solitude of his confinement, to give it any calm consideration. He was at a loss to understand her actions.

Was she a traitor to the South? Did she think to prevent the loss of the flagship of the Federal fleet by detaining him? That could not be, for if ever truth and sincerity shone in a woman's face and were evinced in a woman's actions, they were in Fanny Glen's appearance and life. Her patriotism was unquestioned. That hypothesis must be dismissed at once.

Was it because she loved him so that, fancying the expedition promised certain death to him, she had taken this unfortunate method of preserving his life? He had not been too agitated in the strong room of her

house to realize as he held her that in some mysterious way she was happy at being in his arms. His heart leaped at the recollection. She had not struggled. She had almost nestled against him.

He could recall the clasp of her arms, the kiss that she had given him, the words that she had said. He was almost sure that she loved him as he thought of these things.

Yet — she had disgraced him, dishonored him! That was not the act of a loving woman. She had shown herself possessed of a full measure of womanly heroism and courage. She knew exactly what was involved in his failure to carry out his orders. How could she have done it? Was it all acting then? Did her kisses betray him? Was she indeed a traitor — and to him? Yet — for whom?

There was Lacy — oh, had he repented

after all? Had he wished to resume the command he had so reluctantly surrendered? Had she been a party to any plan whereby the matter might be brought about? Was he to be shamed and sacrificed for Lacy's glory and honor by this woman? Perish the thought! Yet why had she fainted on the wharf? Was it at the mention of Lacy's name? Was she alarmed for his safety? If that were the case, why had she not striven to restrain Lacy and allowed him to go in his place?

Suddenly there flashed into his mind that there might be some one on the *Wabash* whom she wished to protect! Could that be the solution of the mystery? No one knew anything of her origin, her past history. Was she faithful to the South, yet had she a — a — lover in the Union fleet? Was she indeed what he called her, a heart-

less coquette? He could have sworn from that brief moment when he held her in his arms, when he looked at her, that she loved him. She had returned his kiss. Oh, had she? Was it a dream? A play? To deceive him? Great God! was he going mad?

Of only one thing was he certain. He could never disclose to any one the cause of his failure to present himself on the wharf in time. Whether she loved Lacy, or some one in the Union fleet, made no difference to his love. He would love her till he died. Ay, he would love her even in the face of her treachery, her faithlessness — everything! He hated himself for this, but it was true, he could not deny it.

And he would save her from the consequences of her action at the cost of his life— his honor even. What had he to live for anyway, if she were taken from him? Death

might come. It would come. He would make no defence. It was quite within the power of a court-martial to order him shot. And it was quite within the power of a court-martial to punish Fanny Glen, too, if he fastened the culpability for his failure upon her; perhaps not by death, but certainly by disgrace and shame. The city was under martial rule, General Beauregard was supreme. No, he could not expose her to that condemnation — he loved her too well.

Yet he wished that he could hate her, as he paced up and down the long room, stopping at the windows to stare out into the dark in the direction of the sea — where he should have been if all had gone well.

He was too far away to hear the explosion of the torpedo, which was muffled, because it took place under water, but he could hear the batteries of the ships as they opened on

the blockade-runners, and the answer from the forts, and he knew that something had happened at any rate. And his suspense as to that added to his wretchedness. Lacy had supplanted him and reaped the glory — again. It was maddening. No one came to bring him any word. The general concluded to postpone his inquiry until the next morning, and Sempland paced the floor the night long in a pitiable condition of wounded love, blasted hope, shattered fame.

At home, not far away, poor Fanny Glen was even more miserable than Rhett Sempland, for she had divined — yes, so soon as the two men had left her presence the afternoon before, she had recognized the fact — that she loved Sempland. Conviction had grown upon her swiftly, and in those moments when she was fearful that he would

succeed in his purpose, when she had kept him a prisoner in her home to prevent him from taking out the *David* to try to blow up the *Wabash*, she knew that she loved him.

When he had held her in his arms in that bold and successful effort to escape, when he had strained her to his breast, when he had kissed her — oh, that kiss! — the consciousness of her passion overwhelmed her. The recollection of it even filled her with passionate tenderness. She had not been afraid when he had threatened her with the pistol. She could have died easily then — in his arms, with his kiss upon her lips, his heart beating against her own. He loved her! Nothing else mattered for the moment.

She had endeavored to keep him a prisoner partly for his own sake, but principally for another and greater reason. She had not

thought of disgrace or shame to him. It had all come so swiftly. She had no time to reflect at all. She had decided upon impulse, with but one thought at first — to save the Union ship. In her sudden alarm and anxiety she had not realized that she was playing a traitor's part. Or if she had, she had done it willingly, in the belief that the punishment would fall upon her, and that he would be held blameless.

But for whatever reason she had acted as she had, she had failed after all, for another had taken Sempland's part, and the flagship, if the *David* succeeded, was doomed. Her sacrifice was unavailing. She had lost everything. Sempland had shrunk away from her when she had confronted him and the general on the wharf, and when she had recovered consciousness he was gone. She could not know his heart had gone out to her

"Poor little Fanny Glen . . . she had lost on every hand."

lying there, nor how they had hurried him away from her prostrate figure.

He would never forgive her — never! she thought miserably. He was under arrest now. What was that word she had caught as she ran toward them? Coward! They would kill him perhaps. She had lost all — love, the ship, everything! Lacy, too, was gone. He had taken the boat out in Sempland's place. Why had she not thought of that possibility? And he had loved her, and he would never come back.

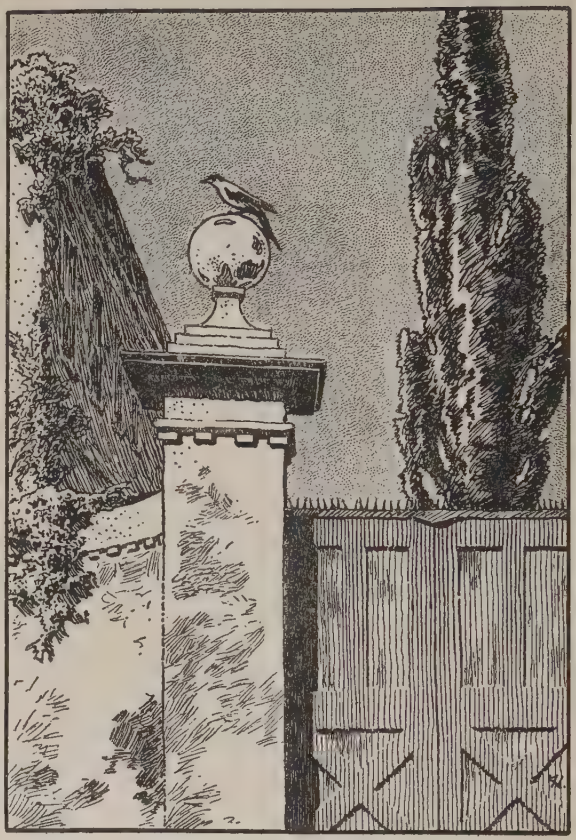
With a misery akin to Sempland's she heard the bombardment which proclaimed that something had happened. Had the flagship been blown up? Nothing was left to her. She would go to the general and tell the truth in the morning, and then — he would be free. They could punish her

and she could die. Well, death would be welcome.

Poor little Fanny Glen! She had played, and played the fool exceedingly — and she had lost on every hand!

CHAPTER X

A STUBBORN PROPOSITION



CHAPTER X

A STUBBORN PROPOSITION

The general, who was always on the alert, ordinarily began his work with the sun, and rarely did he stop with the setting of it, either. The next morning, therefore, he was at his headquarters at an unusually early hour.

Fortune had favored him in that one of the harbor patrol boats, making a daring reconnaissance about midnight, to discover if possible what had happened to the *David*, had captured a whale boat from one of the Union ships, bound on a similar errand, and had brought her crew to the city. By questioning them Beauregard learned of the blowing up of the

Housatonic, and the almost certain loss of the torpedo boat. He was sorry that he missed the *Wabash* and the admiral, and intensely grieved over the lack of any tidings from the *David* or her men, which, however, caused him little surprise, but he was glad, indeed, they had been so brilliantly successful in eliminating the magnificent new steam sloop-of-war *Housatonic* from the force blockading them.

Incidentally he learned, with some additional satisfaction, that Admiral Vernon was to be relieved of his command on account of illness and was going North with his flagship in a few days. The admiral had shown himself so intensely enterprising and pugnacious that Beauregard hoped and expected that any change in opponents would be for the betterment of the situation from the Southern point of view.

When he had digested the important news of the morning, he sent for his prisoner of the night before. The general had been very indignant on the wharf, and justly so, but he instinctively felt that there was something in the situation, which, if he could get at it, might relieve from the odium of his position the young officer, whose family history, no less than his personal character, absolutely negatived the idea of cowardice or treachery.

General Beauregard hoped that by questioning him quietly and calmly, and by representing to him the critical situation in which he found himself, that he might induce him to clear up the mystery. He spoke to him kindly, therefore, when he was ushered into the room and bade him be seated. He marked with soldierly appreciation of the lieutenant's feelings the

evidences of his sleepless night, the anguish of his soul, in the haggard look upon his face.

"Mr. Sempland," he began with impressive and deliberate gravity, carefully weighing his words that they might make the deeper impression upon the younger man, for whom he felt profound pity, "you bear one of the noblest names in the commonwealth. I knew your father and your grandfather. They were men of the highest courage and of unimpeachable honor. Their devotion to the South cannot be questioned. I grieve more than I can say to find you in so equivocal a position. I am convinced that there is some explanation for it, and I ask you, not as your general, but as your friend, to disclose it to me."

"You called me a coward last night, sir."

"In the heat of my disappointment and surprise I did make use of that term, sir. It was a mistake. I regret it," said the general, magnanimously. "I do not believe your failure to take out the *David* arose from any fear."

This was a great concession indeed, and Sempland was intensely relieved, and an immense load was lifted from his breast by the general's reassuring words.

"Sir, I thank you. I could have borne anything than that."

"But, my boy," continued the general, severely, "you must remember that you still lie under the imputation of treachery to the South, and you will recognize readily that such an accusation is scarcely less terrible than the other."

"General Beauregard, believe me, sir," burst out Sempland, impetuously, "I pledge

you my word of honor, I am not a traitor to the South, I would die for my country gladly if it would do her service. I fully intended to take out the *David*. I begged for the detail, and was thankful beyond measure to you for giving it to me. I was overwhelmed with anger and dismay and horror at my failure. I swear to you, sir, by all that is good and true, by everything holy, that it was not my fault that I was not there — I — I — was detained."

"Detained? By whom?"

Sempland only bit his lip and looked dumbly at the general.

"Come, my boy, I want to help you," said the veteran officer, persuasively. "Who, or what, detained you? Where were you detained? It must have been some man — or was it a woman? Tell me, and, by heavens, I'll make such an example of the

traitor as will never be forgotten in South Carolina or the Confederacy!"

"I cannot, sir."

"Think! Your rank, your honor, it may be your life, all depend upon your reply. You are concealing something from me. You do not answer," continued Beauregard, keenly scanning the face of the young man standing before him in stubborn silence. "I see that you are shielding some one, sheltering some unworthy person. Who is it?"

Still no answer. The general's patience was gradually vanishing in the face of such obstinacy. Yet he restrained his growing displeasure, and continued his questioning.

"Where did you go after you left me?"

"To my quarters, sir, to write a letter."

"Were you there all the time?"

"No, sir."

"Where did you go after the letter was written?"

No answer.

"Major Lacy said —" began the general, changing his tactics.

"Did he tell you?" cried Sempland, in sudden alarm and great dismay.

"He knew then?" exclaimed the general, triumphant in his clew. "No, he didn't tell. He never will tell now. I have learned from a picket boat that was captured last night by our patrols, that nothing was seen of the *David* after the explosion."

"Poor Lacy!" said Sempland. "Well, sir, he died the death of his choice."

"Yes," said Beauregard, "little in life became him as the ending of it."

A little silence fell between the two in the room.

"And I might have been there," said Sempland at last.

"I had rather see you dead, sir, than in your present case," commented the general, deftly.

"Yes, sir, and I'd rather be there myself," returned the young man, "but I — I beg your pardon, General, were they successful?"

"In a measure. They missed the *Wabash*, but blew up the *Housatonic*."

"Did the cotton ships get out?"

"Unfortunately, no. One of them was sunk. The other two returned in safety. But all this is beside the question. We are losing sight of the main point. For the last time, will you tell me why you failed to be on hand?"

"General Beauregard, as I said, I would rather be where Lacy is now than have failed

as I did, but I cannot tell you what detained me."

"For the last time, Mr. Sempland, I beg of you to answer me. You know the consequences?"

The general spoke sharply now. Such determination and contumacy had at last got the better of his patience and forbearance. He had tried to save Sempland, but the young officer would give him no assistance. Well, on his own head it would be.

"You realize what is before you, sir?"

"Yes, sir."

"A court-martial. Possibly — nay, certainly, death. For in the face of your refusal to explain I can do nothing more for you."

Sempland bowed to the inevitable.

"You have said," he began, "that you did not believe I was a coward, nor a traitor.

If you will not allow the stigma of either of these charges to rest upon me, I will bear with equanimity whatever punishment the court-martial may award."

"Even to loss of life?"

"Yes, sir."

"Very well," said the general, shrugging his shoulders, a trick of his French ancestry. "I have done my best, Mr. Sempland, for you. As to my personal beliefs, I can and will express them, but I cannot tell whether the court-martial will receive them or not. Will nothing move you?"

"Nothing, sir."

The general struck a bell on the desk before him.

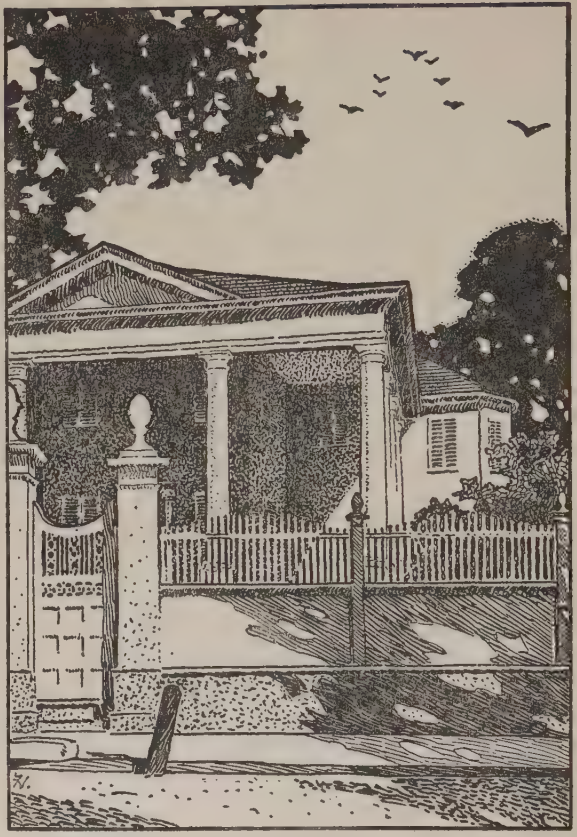
"Orderly," he said, as a soldier presented himself, "my compliments to the assistant adjutant-general. Ask him to come here. Ah, General Wylie," he said as that func-

tionary presented himself, "will you make out an order assembling a court-martial to try Lieutenant Rhett Sempland, here, for disobedience of orders and neglect of duty in the presence of the enemy, and — well, that will be enough, I think," he continued after a pause which was fraught with agony to Sempland at least, lest the general should mention cowardice or treason again. "Meanwhile see that Mr. Sempland is carefully guarded here in the headquarters building."

"Very good, sir," said the officer, saluting. "This way, Mr. Sempland."

CHAPTER XI

THE CONFESSION THAT CLEARED



CHAPTER XI

THE CONFESSION THAT CLEARED

As the two men left the room the orderly entered it once more and announced to the general that a lady was below who asked the privilege of an interview with him.

"Lady? What lady?" demanded Beauregard, impatiently.

He was in no mood for feminine society after the difficult interview in which he had just participated.

"I think it is Miss Glen, sir. She says she must see you and—"

"Ah!" interrupted the general, hastily, as he recollected the scene on the wharf the night before, when Fanny Glen had fainted

at the news that the boat was gone and that Lacy had gone with it. "Show her in here at once, orderly."

He had intended to seek her in her house in the course of the morning and break the melancholy news to her that the torpedo boat was lost in all probability with all on board, for from her agitation on the wharf he inferred that her affections were bestowed upon Lacy. He was very sorry for her, of course; but knowing Lacy as he had, and estimating Fanny Glen as he did, there was a certain sense of relief that she would not be condemned to a lifetime of misery which such a marriage would inevitably have entailed. Still he pitied her profoundly, and he pitied her more when she came into the private office in the wake of the orderly and threw back her veil. Her beautiful face showed the sorrow under which she labored.

Suffering had thrown a blight upon it. The freshness and youth seemed to have departed from it. She was a piteous little spectacle indeed.

The general received her with the utmost cordiality and consideration. He handed her to a chair, and bade the orderly see that they were not disturbed on any account.

"Miss Fanny," he began gently — the war had brought the general and the brave girl very close together — "I was coming over to see you in a little while. You have shown yourself a brave little woman many times. You need all your courage now."

"Yes, General," said the girl, faintly, "I know."

"You have sustained a terrible loss."

"Is — is — Mr. Sempland — ?"

"He is well enough at present. I refer to your friend, Major Lacy."

"Is he — ?"

"I am sorry to say that in all probability he has lost his life in the torpedo boat. We can get no tidings of her or of any of her crew. She must have sunk with the ship."

"Did they succeed, sir?" interrupted Fanny Glen with an anxiety and an apprehension too great to be controlled.

"They did," returned Beauregard, somewhat surprised at her question, "but the torpedo boat, I think, went down with the ship she blew up; at any rate no one has seen her or any of her crew since the explosion. I knew that it was almost certain death to them."

Fanny Glen sank back in the chair. She almost lost consciousness in her agony. She murmured strange and incoherent words. The general did not understand them, but

he rose, came to her side, bent over her and took her hand, patting it softly.

"I know, I know, my dear child," he said gently, "how you must suffer. Many another woman has had to give up her heart's desire for our beloved country. Think of the service he rendered, to you and to all of us! Think of his noble sacrifice, his death! Cherish his memory and be proud that he loved you and that you loved him. Few women have done more for the South than you, and there is still much to do. Work will assuage your grief," continued the general, laying his hand tenderly upon the bowed head. "You will always have the deathless memory of his heroism."

"Oh!" cried the woman, throwing back her head, "you are wrong. You do not know, you do not understand. I honored Major Lacy, I rejoiced in his courage, but

I did not love him. It is not he that I think of. It is my father."

"Your father? What do you mean?"

"Admiral Vernon."

"What!"

"Yes, he is my father. My name is Fanny Glen Vernon."

"Good heavens! It cannot be possible."

"It is true. My mother was a Southern woman, one of the Glens of Halifax —"

"I knew her!" exclaimed Beauregard.

"She died when I was a child, and I was brought up by her sister. My father — I did not see much of him. He was a sailor, and after my mother's death he sought constantly to be in active service. When the war broke out he said he must stand by the old flag. I strove to persuade him differently. It was horrible to me, to think that a son of South Carolina, and my father,

would fight against her. There was a quarrel between us. I told my father I would not acknowledge him any longer. I repudiated the Vernon name and came here and worked for the South, as you know. When I learned yesterday that you were going to blow up the *Wabash*—"

"But my dear child," interrupted the general, quickly, "we didn't blow up the *Wabash*."

"But you said that Major Lacy had succeeded!" said the girl in great bewilderment.

"He did. The *Wabash* and *Housatonic* exchanged places during the night, and the latter was sunk. The *Wabash* is all right. For your sake, my dear Miss Fanny, I say thank God for the mistake."

"Then my father is safe?"

"He is. Some Yankees we captured this morning say that he is to be relieved of his

command and ordered North on a sick leave. He will no longer be in danger from us, you see."

"Thank God, thank God!" cried the girl, and the relief in her voice and face seemed to make another woman of her. "It was wrong, I know. It was treason to the South — I love the South — but I strove to prevent — "

"Ah!" exclaimed Beauregard. "I have it now! Sempland — "

"Oh, sir!" cried the girl, "where is he?"

"He is preparing," continued Beauregard, coolly — he had the clew to the mystery and he determined to follow it to the end — "to be tried by a court-martial — "

"By a court-martial, General Beauregard! For what, sir?"

"For disobedience of orders and neglect of duty, in the face of the enemy. And I

am in two minds whether to these charges should be added cowardice and treason or not!"

"Impossible!" exclaimed Fanny Glen.

"Miss Glen, it is an absolute fact. He came to me yesterday afternoon and volunteered for the command of the expedition. Begged for it, in fact. Major Lacy reluctantly but generously yielded to him with my consent."

"It was for me he sought it," said the girl, full of reproach for herself. "I had mocked him for his lack of distinction, sir, before he saw you. He hazarded his life for my approval and for the cause of the South."

A fuller light broke upon the general's mind. He understood all now, yet he went on pitilessly.

"After getting command in this peculiar

way he failed to present himself on the wharf at the appointed time. We waited ten minutes for him, as long as we dared, in fact, and then as you know, sent the boat out under Major Lacy."

"He was detained," said the girl, faintly.

"So he said when I arrested him last night, and he repeated the statement this morning. I pressed him to tell me by whom and where he had been detained, but he refused to tell. I plied him with every argument at my command. I pointed out to him the consequences of his action, his failure to justify himself, that is, showed him clearly the penalty which the court-martial would undoubtedly inflict upon him —"

"That is?"

"Death, madam! He will probably be shot to-morrow, for his guilt is clear."

The girl's head fell forward in her hands.

There was a little silence in the room. The general watched her narrowly, but said nothing further. He was waiting, in full confidence that she would speak. He could afford to be patient now.

CHAPTER XII

THE CULPRIT IS ARRESTED

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"General Beauregard," she whispered at last, "I am the traitor. He was detained by me."

"That doesn't excuse him," said the general, severely. "Any man who fails in his duty because he succumbs to a woman's wiles, even though that woman loves him, has no plea to urge in justification. He is a soldier. His duty to obey orders is first of all."

"But — but — you don't understand. I — I — kept him there by force, sir. Major Lacy told me of the expedition — he and Mr. Sempland had called upon me

in the afternoon. They — they had each of them asked me — in — marriage. We — we quarrelled. Mr. Sempland left me in anger, Major Lacy divined that I — I — cared for Mr. Sempland. He came back later in the evening and told me Mr. Sempland was going to blow up the *Wabash*, and he begged me to see Mr. Sempland again and bid him good-by. I had only two thoughts — that it meant certain death to my father and possibly Mr. Sempland — the man — I — What was I to do? I might have sacrificed myself by letting Mr. Sempland run the risk, but my father, sir — "

She stopped and looked at him in pitiful entreaty.

"Go on," said the general, inflexibly.

"I had Mr. Sempland ushered into the strong room of the house — the old Rennie house, you know, sir?"

The general nodded.

"The door was locked on him after he entered. My three negro boys kept watch outside. There was no escape for him. He beat and hammered on the door until his hands bled. He begged and implored to be released. It was agonizing to hear. I did not realize that he was telling the truth when he said he was being dishonored. I had no time to consider anything. I only thought of my father — helpless on that great ship — the sudden rush of that awful little boat."

"You were a traitor to the South!" said General Beauregard, coldly.

"Yes. God pity me, I see it now," answered the girl.

"How did he get away? Did you release him?" continued the general.

"He swore that he would kill himself if I did not open the door."

"Did you open it?"

"Yes."

"Then did he burst through you and the men?"

"No. They were armed and would have killed him. He could not have made his escape that way. He begged me to speak to him alone for a moment. I went into the room and shut the door. He seized me in his arms and then put his pistol to my head, threatening to kill me if I did not order the door opened."

"And you obeyed?"

"No, I refused. Then he called out to the slaves to open at once or he would kill me, their mistress."

"What happened then?"

"I ordered them not to open the door, to let me die. But they did as he said. He made them leave the hall. They

"'You were a traitor to the South!' said General Beauregard, coldly."

obeyed him in spite of my protests. Then he threw me aside, and ran to the wharf. I followed after. The rest you know. It was useless after all. I thought no one would go if he did not. I thought if I could detain him a night — get some delay — I would come here in the morning and tell you the truth and ask you to spare my father."

"Miss Glen," said the little general, "I would not spare my own father if my duty demanded that he be sacrificed."

"I suppose so. You are a man, you cannot understand. I am a woman. There were but two I loved on earth. I was ashamed of my father, but I loved him. Four years of war have taught me other things. I am sorry that he did not go with the South, but it is not for me to judge him. I could not see him condemned to death

and not raise a hand to save him. And I discovered too late that I — I — cared for Mr. Sempland. I drove him from me in scorn and contempt — I taunted him. He sought that detail to prove his courage, I could not let him go to certain death. If he did it would be my fault, I would have murdered him. Pity me! I am only a woman. Try to understand!"

"But the young man has proven his courage —"

"I know, I know! I never doubted it," she interrupted.

"By keeping silent this morning, by facing certain death upon charges that are worse than the punishment to a soldier, in that they blast his fame," said the general.

"Thank God for that kindness to me!"

"And he did all this for you."

"He loves me, as I love him."

"But your love has disgraced him, his has protected you."

The girl shrank before the stern words of the soldier.

"Yes," she said faintly, "it is as you say. I alone am to blame. Let mine alone be the punishment. I will tell all to the court. He must be cleared!"

"It is just," said Beauregard. "You have committed an act of treason against the South. There is, however, some excuse for your action, and your previous record in the hospital service has been such as to entitle you to every consideration. I am disposed to be lenient, but the offence is one I cannot condone. I will have to put you under guard until I can consider what is best to be done."

"I make no protest," said Fanny Glen. "You will, of course, release Mr. Semp-

land from arrest, and see that his reputation takes no hurt?"

"I will attend to that."

He struck a bell again and summoned the assistant adjutant-general once more. Fanny Glen dropped her veil so that her face was concealed from the officer. He did not perceive what she had suffered and was suffering. Yet her heart was full of relief — her father was safe, her lover would be free, and, best of all, she had such testimony as few women have received to the depth and power of his passion. He loved her indeed. There was a joy in that thought that set her heart beating.

The general drew his subordinate into a corner of the room, where they conversed earnestly for a few moments. Then they came back to the young girl.

"Adjutant-General Wylie," said the com-

mander-in-chief, "you will take charge of Miss Glen. You will follow him, Miss Glen. I will communicate my further plans within an hour."

There was something intensely pathetic in the droop of the little figure, in spite of the comforting thoughts that had come to her, when the girl rose and followed the soldier from the room.

The general was almost persuaded to call after her a reassuring word or two, but he restrained himself and said nothing.

CHAPTER XIII

COMPANIONS IN MISERY

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It is conceivable that a man could manage to bear without repining the loss of fame and fortune, that he could survive deprivation of rank and station with equanimity, nay, more, that he might even contemplate with a philosophic indifference an impending forfeiture of life, provided he had love to sustain him. But when that is lost, and consequently everything is gone, he has to fall back upon conscious rectitude alone, which is well enough in schemes of philosophy, but most inadequate in the emergencies and crises of real life.

Lieutenant Rhett Sempland, under arrest, in confinement, awaiting trial, alone and unvisited by any one,—which meant Fanny Glen,—felt that morning as if he had indeed lost everything. He had been certain at first that Fanny Glen had returned his swift, impulsive caress in the strong room even in the peculiar circumstances under which he had bestowed it upon her, and he had therefore naturally inferred that she loved him. Indeed, when he thought of the look in her eyes when he strained her to his breast, although he had the pistol pointed at her forehead, the conviction was strong within him.

Yet, again and again this proposition presented itself to him, crushing his hope and breaking his heart: How could a woman who loved a man, and a woman especially who had become sufficiently conversant with

military affairs through her hospital service and other experiences in this war to understand what she was doing, have placed her lover in so compromising a position?

And most damnably crushing thought of all, why had she not had the common decency after all to come and see him this morning? He was in trouble, and he suffered for her sake. She must know that, she must realize it. Why did she give no sign of it?

His loneliness and his craving to see her was terrible. His desire to see her grew with every passing moment, he was consumed by it; yet, he thought bitterly, to what purpose, after all?

Some of this had come to him last night; but the more he thought of it, the more uncertain, miserable, and deserted he felt. So it is not strange that it was not so

much his own impending fate as it was the hopeless endeavor to discover the real reason for Fanny Glen's conduct which engrossed his attention that fateful morning.

He had failed miserably, officially and personally. He decided, against heart and hope, at last, that he had made no progress in his love affair. The woman he adored had given him convincing proof, so he argued, rebellious against the conclusion to the last, that his professional future was a matter of indifference to her; nay, that his very life was a thing she would jeopard or even forfeit lightly. Lacy, as usual, had stepped in the breach and earned immortal fame, even if he had to die to secure it. Sempland envied him his rest, with his brave companions in arms in the desperate sea venture, beneath the cool, green waters of the ocean that laved their beloved shore.

Well, there was no use in worrying or speculating any longer. It would all be over soon now. He was sufficiently experienced as a soldier to know what would happen to him. There was only one possible verdict, only one punishment for the crimes with which he was charged.

When he was sentenced to death, his friends would undoubtedly move heaven and earth to get President Davis to mitigate or commute his punishment; but he was resolved in his own mind firmly to discourage such efforts. He took a gloomy view of life and of love and of women — do they not always go together in the heart of youth? There was nothing now, therefore, for which he cared to live.

Yet if he could only see Fanny Glen again! Why did she not send some one to inquire as to his whereabouts? Surely she

might ask after his welfare. She must know he was under arrest. Why could she not come herself? He was sacrificing himself for her, to preserve her freedom, ay, her honor and reputation. She might not love him, but at least she might have manifested a decent interest in his fate. The barest politeness ought to make a woman take some thought for a man who was about to be shot for her sake, he thought bitterly.

Well, he swore to himself, if she should come at the last moment, she would find him as cold as ice, as indifferent as a Laodicean! He would show her that he appreciated at its true value not only her heinous conduct, but her criminal neglect as well. He would make her understand that it was not love for her that kept him silent. Oh, no! Simply the obligation of a gentleman, a man of honor, albeit a quixotic one.

Oh, noble resolution! He would go to his grave silent, loading upon her the weight of an obligation, from which she should never escape. When the war was over she might marry that man on the *Wabash* whom she had been so anxious to save that she had pretended love for him — Sempland! Yes, he would be under obligation, too, this Union sailor, for to Sempland would be due his possession of Fanny Glen.

The imprisoned officer ground his teeth in rage at that thought and turned suddenly from the barred window where he had been standing listlessly looking down the bay toward old Fort Sumter, almost knocked to pieces by fierce bombardments, yet still flying the Stars and Bars in brave defiance of the ironclads far away, and with clenched hands, firm-set lips, and troubled brow, began pacing up and down the long apart-

ment. The moments dragged miserably. He wished they would assemble that court-martial and have it over with. He would not care what they did, he thought savagely. He was sick and tired of the whole business — the war, the South, General Beauregard, Fanny Glen, everything, everybody!

Suddenly he heard footsteps, the clanking of a sword, a word or two exchanged between the sentry and a newcomer, in the corridor. Some one turned the handle of the door. It was opened.

Sempland instantly stood at attention, then folded his arms with great dignity, expecting, of course, to confront some one sent to fetch him to the opening session of the court. General Beauregard was remarkable for his promptness and celerity, and he had declared that the young man should be tried immediately. He had wondered

already at the unnecessary delay. But no stern-featured, dignified official presented himself. Sempland's astonished gaze fell upon the small figure of a woman!

The door was instantly closed and locked behind her without a word of explanation from those outside, and the two were alone in a locked room for the second time in twenty-four hours. There was a difference in the situation that morning, although the man did not know it. On this occasion Fanny Glen was a prisoner as well as he.

He could not see her face as her veil still remained down, yet there was no mistaking her form. Indeed he felt that had it been midnight he would have recognized her presence. His heart leaped within his breast at the sight of her. He thought it beat so she might almost have heard it in the perfect silence that had fallen between them.

His first impulse was to run toward her and take her in his arms once more. Above all his troubled conclusions of the night before the recollection of that instant when he had held her so closely still remained dominant. In her presence he almost forgot everything but that. Yet he looked at her impassively for a moment, bowed slightly, then turned and walked deliberately to the other end of the room, resuming his station at the window looking out to sea.

She had an excellent view of his back. The beating of his heart did not manifest itself outwardly after all. To her gaze he appeared as impassive, as quiet, as motionless, as if he had been cut out of iron like the grated bars. It was a most unsatisfactory beginning to what must prove an important interview. They played at cross purposes indeed. He had sacrificed him-

self to save her, she had sacrificed herself to save him, and here they were both prisoners apparently, and things were as unsettled as ever!

Poor Fanny Glen was infinitely more surprised at the sight of her lover than he had been at the sight of her. Not until she had fairly entered the room and the door had been closed behind her had she realized that she was not alone, that he was there. She stood rooted to the spot, waiting to see what he would do. Had he followed his first impulse, which would have been to sweep her to his breast, he would have found her unresisting, submissive, acquiescent. The kiss which had been given her last night still trembled upon her lips. It was for the taking, she was his for the asking.

Yet his first movement, save for that cold, perfunctory salutation, had been one of

indifference amounting to contempt. He despised her, then; he hated her. She had brought him to a terrible position. Ah, well, he would be sorry for her when he learned her reason, and he would be more sorry for his treatment of her when he learned that he would be free and she would suffer for it, not he.

There was something very attractive, after all, in her possible martyrdom. The thought gave her not a little comfort. She was surprised that Sempland had not been immediately summoned to the general's presence when she had been put under guard. She supposed, however, that the delay was due to some military technicality, and she imagined that the next moment would see him called from the room in her presence. And she would be left alone, most miserably, forlornly alone to face her fate.

Being a martyr is certainly a fine thing, but the position loses half its charm unless people know it. To complete her melancholy satisfaction, he — and he considered himself the martyr, not she! — must recognize it. If he would only turn and speak to her. This silence, this immobility, on his part, was unbearable.

She coughed gently and took a step or two across the floor toward him. He gave no sign that he heard her. How cruel he was! So despotic, so determined, so masterful! She abominated a masterful man! She coughed again, and this time a little more emphatically. Still no attention. It was discouraging!

There was a small mirror upon the wall of the room. Her eye in accordance with an instinct feminine, fell swiftly upon it. She lifted her veil to see how far the expe-

riences she had gone through had affected her most potent talisman.

"Heavens!" she thought, "what a fright!"

To take off her hat was the work of a moment. Her swift, subtle fingers busied themselves with her rebellious curls. Another glance reassured her a little. She felt more confident. She coughed again, but as before, he did not move.

"Mr. Sempland," she said softly at last, in sheer desperation.

He turned on his heel as suddenly as if he had been moved by a spring, and faced her. He had been longing for a chance to recede from his position.

"Miss Glen," he answered with depressing coldness.

"You — you — don't — seem very glad — to see me, sir."

The moment was one of great importance to both of them; their future, the life and happiness of one, the honor and good name of the other, depended upon it — so they thought at least. The conversation accordingly began, as conversations under such circumstances usually begin, in trivialities.

"I am not," he answered shortly and mendaciously as well.

"I suppose not. I noticed that you — your welcome — wasn't very cordial, I am sure."

"I didn't mean it to be."

"Why didn't you order me out of your room, then?" she went on with becoming humility.

"This room is not mine, I am a prisoner, madam. I have no choice as to my guests."

"But you will soon be free," returned the girl, quietly. "That is, as soon as General Beauregard learns that I — I — "

"Give yourself no concern, Miss Glen," he said loftily; "I shall not betray you."

"What! You won't tell him?" with a perfect assumption of profound amazement.

"I will not," sternly.

"But they say — I heard — you are to — be — court-martialled."

Her voice sank to a low whisper, as if she were awestricken by the heavy tidings.

"I am."

"And that you will be found guilty — "

"I shall be."

"And — you may — be — shot!"

"You should have thought of that last night when you arrested me, imprisoned me, and so made me false to my duty;

but what's the use — " He checked the swift rush of his indignation and continued in bitter calm: "A woman who could so trifle with a soldier's honor cannot appreciate the consequences to him."

"I am sure," she went on very humbly, "that I didn't realize what would happen."

"Of course not," sarcastically.

"And I am willing to make any amends that I can. I will tell General Beauregard myself that I did it. That it was my fault. That I alone am to blame."

"I forbid you to do it!" he exclaimed with great energy.

"I do not care what you say, I shall do it!" stubbornly.

"You do not know what it means," he urged, his heart leaping at the thought that she was willing to set him right and take the blame upon herself — and she

loved him after all! Yet he could not permit her to do it. "You do not know what this would mean to you," he repeated. "It was an act of high treason to the South. They will put you in my place. They will certainly punish you."

"Would they shoot me?" she inquired in her most terrified manner, her eyes wide open with beautifully simulated terror.

He felt so sorry for the poor little frightened thing. He longed to gather her up in his arms and comfort her, reassure her.

"They might," he returned, stepping nearer to her and visibly unbending. "I cannot have you take the risk. I won't allow it!"

There was something nice, after all, in the imperative mood, she thought.

"'Would they shoot me?' she inquired."

"But how will you prevent it, Mr. Sempland?"

"I tell you, I forbid you!"

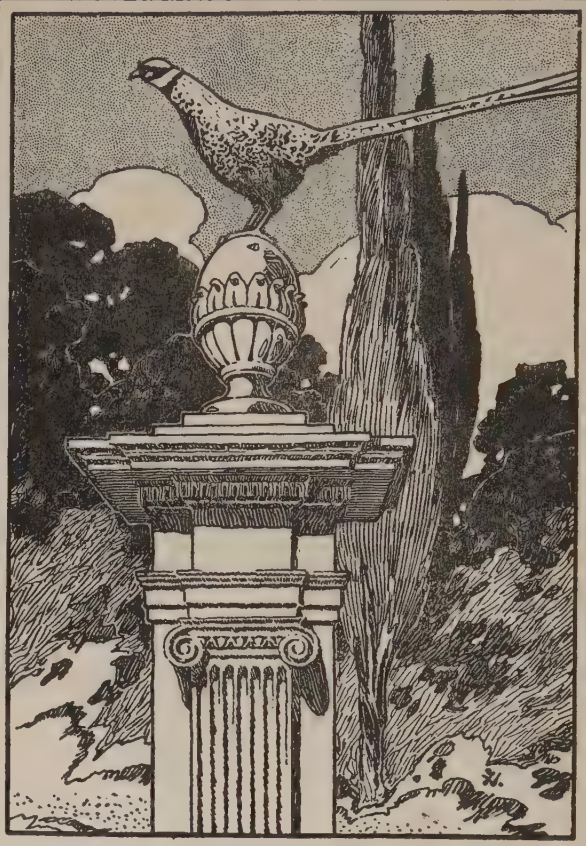
"But if I disobey? I never promised to obey you, did I? — that is, not yet?"

"I cannot compel you, of course," he answered sadly, drawing back a little. "I know I have neither power nor influence over you, Miss Glen, but this, at least, I can do. I can swear that you are not telling the truth."

"I am sure they would not believe you against me," she retorted vehemently.

CHAPTER XIV

THE WOMAN EXPLAINS



CHAPTER XIV

THE WOMAN EXPLAINS

"I THINK they would believe me against even you," answered Sempland. "I would tell them that you — ah — love me and that you are trying to save me. And more, if you say one word to General Beauregard, or any one else about it after you leave this room, I give you my word of honor I will declare that I was afraid to go and that I stayed with you."

"Why will you be so foolish?" she asked.

"Because I love you," he burst out, "that's the only reason. I have told you before, but you did not seem to believe it,

at least you did not appear to care; but now it won't hurt you to hear it once more. You won't have to hear it again from me. It's the last time. I expect every moment they will be here to summon me before the court-martial, so I must tell you now. You are a cruel, heartless coquette. You encouraged Lacy —"

"I did not!" indignantly.

"And you didn't discourage me."

"How dare you say so?"

"Last night when I held you in my arms and kissed you —"

"I was powerless —"

"When I released you you clasped me around the neck and returned my caress. I'll swear you did, and all the time you had another man in your heart."

"Another man?" she exclaimed in great astonishment.

"Yes. That man on the *Wabash!*"

"Oh, the man on the *Wabash!*"

"Yes. You wanted to save him. So you played with me. Why weren't you honest about it? Why didn't you tell me the truth? But no, you chose to disgrace me for him. Well, you succeeded. I shall pay the penalty. I shall keep silent for your sake. He may have you and you may have him, but my death will be ever between you. The burden of obligation will be heavy upon you both, more than you can carry!"

He had worked himself up into a jealous rage by this time. His self-control was completely gone.

"Who is this man?" he burst out at last, while she took a wicked joy in his misapprehension.

"His — his — name — is —" she spoke

slowly and with seeming reluctance, as if to spare him.

"Then there is a man? Good God! I had hoped, in spite of everything, that I might have been mistaken, that you acted so for some other reason. Do you love him?"

"Yes," faintly, turning away her head.

"Do you really love him, or are you making a fool of him as you did of me?"

"But I — love you, too," she said demurely, slowly dropping her head so that her face was half hidden from his intent gaze.

"How can you love both of us?" he exclaimed, angered beyond endurance by her apparent coquetry.

"It's — it's — different," she answered demurely.

"If Lacy were here, I suppose he would

understand, but women such as you are beyond me."

"It seems so."

"But why prolong this interview longer, Miss Glen? Your secret is safe with me. Probably you came here to learn that. I will not allow you to betray it, either;" — how inconsistent he was, she thought; — "you know that I love you, and I know that you do not love me, that your heart is with that man on the ship. Won't you please leave me to myself? I really shall need all my self-command, my strength, to face the court-martial, and you — you — unman me. I thank you for coming to see me, but — forgive my apparent discourtesy — I would rather be alone. Good-by."

"Wait," she said. "That man on the *Wabash* — "

"By heaven!" he interrupted savagely

— he was a man of somewhat elemental passions when he was aroused, and he was thoroughly aroused then — "have you no mercy, no pity? This is too much! I don't want to hear a word about him. Whoever he is I —"

"Stop, sir!" cried the girl, impressively, "or you will say something for which you will be sorry."

"Sorry! I should like to have him within reach of my hand!" he said grimly, extending his arm as he spoke, and his expression was not pleasant to see. "I'd —"

"I am sure," she went on hurriedly, cutting him off, "you would not do a thing to him if he stood right here."

"Would I not? And pray, why not?" he asked her bitterly.

"Because —"

She stopped, reluctant to disclose her

secret. Once she did so her power was gone.

"Because —" she said again.

"Tell me in heaven's name! You torture me!"

"Because he — is — my —"

Again she stopped, and again his anxiety got the better of him. He caught her hands in his own and held them with a grasp that hurt her.

"My God, will you cease this cruelty? He is not your — you are not really married to him, are you?"

"Hardly. Let go of my hands," she answered, striving to draw away: yet for a fairly strong young woman she exhibited an astonishing feebleness in her endeavor.

"Who is he?" with imperious insistence.

"My father — there! Now, will you release me?"

"Your father! And there is no other man?" in great bewilderment, through which the glimmering of greater relief began to shine.

She shook her head.

"And you did this for him alone?"

"No-o-o," with reluctance, "not altogether for him alone."

"Who else then?"

"I told you last night," she answered evasively.

"For me?"

"Ye-es," faintly. "I could not bear to see you lose your — your life."

Slowly she felt herself being drawn nearer to him. She struggled feebly, glad to be overborne by his superior strength. In another moment she was in his arms for the second time. Her head was bent down toward his waistcoat pocket. Holding her

safe with one arm he put his hand under her chin, and turned her face upward. There were blushes on her cheeks, laughter and tears in her eyes. The interrupted kiss trembled upon her lips, and he — well, this time it was longer than the night before and more satisfying. As he kissed her her arms went around his neck again.

"There was no other man," she whispered, "there never was any one but you. I did wrong, very wrong, but my father and you — that was my excuse. And I loved you all the time."

When there was opportunity some moments later for articulate conversation, he endeavored to solve the mystery of her paternity, the understanding of which he had put by in the face of more pressing business — or pleasure.

"Then your name isn't Fanny Glen?"

"That's part of it."

"What's the rest of it?"

"Fanny Glen Vernon."

"What! Is Admiral Vernon your father?"

"He is."

"How is that?"

"When the war broke out he stayed with the North, was true to his flag, he said. I had seen little of him since my mother's death, when I was ten years old. I was a Southern woman. It seemed monstrous to me. I begged and implored him, but uselessly, and finally our relations were broken off. So I dropped the name of Vernon, and came here to work for our cause, the rest you know. But I could not let him be blown up unsuspecting, could I? If he were killed in action, it would be terrible enough, but this was a

dreadful ending. I thought — I don't know what I thought. I love the South, but — "

"I understand, my dearest," he said, in no condition to understand anything very clearly, and caring little for the moment for anything except that she loved him.

"And you forgive me?"

"Forgive you? With all my soul. This moment with you in my arms, with your arms around my neck, with your kisses upon my lips, with your words in my ear, with your love in my heart — this makes up for everything! I shall go to my death gladly."

"To your death!" she exclaimed, drawing away from him in surprise and alarm.

"Yes. Your confession to me makes no difference."

"But I will tell the general."

"I forbid it! Darling, you have com-

mitted an act of treason to the South, and while your love for your father — and for me — has explained it, you could not make such a plea as that before any court-martial composed of soldiers. You would only harm yourself, and you would not help me, and so I won't allow it."

"But I must tell the general!" she persisted.

"Dearest, no," said Sempland, smiling fondly at her. "We will anticipate what might have been. If all had gone well, you would have promised to obey me before the altar. Would you not?"

She nodded with astonishing docility.

"Well, then —"

"And if I will not?"

"Why, then, I shall have to discredit you, as I threatened, and my own situation will be more serious than before, for I shall

brand myself as a coward, as well, and you would not like your lover to have that stigma on him."

"You will not let me save you, then?"

"No," answered the man, sighing deeply, "and life is so different to me now. I didn't care an hour ago what happened, but now—"

There was a tap on the door.

"What is it?" he called out impatiently.

"It's me, Lieutenant Sempland — Sergeant Slattery," answered the sergeant of the guard, a whilom friend to the prisoner. "On me own account, sor, I come to tell ye that they'll be afther comin' for ye in a few minutes, an' ye'd better git ready fer 'em. If ye have anythin' — any preparations to make, ye'd better be quick about it, sor."

"Thank you," answered Sempland.

"You hear, dearest? You must go. I must have a moment to myself to enable me to face this court-martial. Leave me now, I beg of you. Go home. After it is over I shall ask permission of the general to have you visit me."

"I cannot go," said Fanny Glen, archly.

"Why not?"

"I am a prisoner."

"A prisoner! What for?"

"For treachery, disobedience of orders, oh, everything!" she answered glibly.

"What do you mean?"

"General Beauregard sent me here this morning. The court-martial is for me, not you. They're going to set you free and I am to be tried and shot, it may be."

"Nonsense! How did he find out?"

"I told him myself. I didn't disobey

you, you see. You had not forbidden me to do it then."

"What did you tell him?"

"That Admiral Vernon was my father, and that I kept you — I — I — loved you."

"Great heavens! And —"

"And then he called the adjutant-general and they whispered together a moment, and then he sent me here."

"Why did you do it?" cried the man, reproachfully. "They will punish you in some way. I would rather have died than have you tell. What shall we do now?"

CHAPTER XV

THE GENERAL'S LITTLE COMEDY

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THERE was a hurried movement on the part of the sentry in the corridor, followed by the trampling of many feet. Sabres clanked, voices broke the stillness. Fanny Glen was really frightened now. They were coming. They were there. What were they about to do to her? Of course, they would not shoot her, — she was reasonably sure of that, — but in any event she was certain to be parted from her lover. She drew nearer to him as the door was opened.

On the threshold stood General Beauregard himself, his visage charged with an unusual degree of solemnity. Back of

him were grouped the members of his staff and others who had been on the wharf the night before. They were all in full uniform and made a most impressive sight. It was a highly dramatic moment, full of menace to the woman. As for Sempland, he scarcely comprehended it.

"The court-martial!" whispered Fanny Glen, fearfully, instinctively shrinking closer to Sempland as she spoke.

That officer knew, of course, that no court-martial was ever inaugurated in that manner, but he said nothing. He did not understand. He would await developments. Something was in the wind, certainly. What could it be?

"Captain Sempland," said the general, formally, advancing further into the room, followed by the rest, "you are relieved from arrest, sir, and —"

"Captain Sempland?" murmured Sempland in great surprise.

"Yes, sir, Captain Sempland," with marked emphasis on the title. "You are restored to duty forthwith, sir," continued the general, smiling at his astonished subordinate. "The charges of neglect of duty and disobedience of orders which I made last night and repeated this morning are withdrawn. There never was any suspicion of cowardice or treason. Although you did not succeed, having been prevented by causes beyond your control, as I now learn, from taking out the *David*, yet your earnest desire to do so, the fact that you volunteered for the detail, and even besought me to give it to you, the extreme measures to which you resorted to escape from confinement in order to carry out your orders, even going so far as to threaten a lady, warrant

me in promoting you. Here," receiving the weapon from one of the staff officers, "is your sword. I return it to you." Next the general drew some papers from his coat. "Here is your commission as captain. Here are orders which take you to the Army of Northern Virginia. They are accompanied by a personal letter to my friend, General Lee, in which I have asked him to give you a position on his staff with all its opportunities for useful service and distinction. May you reflect credit, as I have no doubt you will, upon the South, the state of South Carolina, and all our hopes and ambitions for you. Gentlemen," to the others, "you are all witnesses to this rehabilitation of Captain Sempland."

The room was instantly filled with the sound of hearty cheering from the officers in attendance.

"General Beauregard, you have overwhelmed me," faltered Sempland as soon as he could make himself heard. "I have done nothing to deserve this honor."

Beauregard stepped nearer to him.

"You would have sacrificed your life for a woman," whispered the gallant little general, approvingly. "I understand." Then he said aloud: "See that you strive to merit our trust and confidence in the future, then. You will have many chances for great deeds with General Lee. Would that I were with him!"

"General," said the young man, "your kindness emboldens me. This lady, sir —"

"Is a prisoner," said the general, shortly.

"I know it, sir. She committed a terrible blunder, yet —"

"Gentlemen," said Beauregard, turning

to his staff officers, "you know the story of last night. How this lady interfered to prevent an important military manœuvre, the object of which was the destruction of the Federal flagship by a torpedo, and incidentally the probable death of Captain Sempland. Such conduct is essentially treasonable, especially in a state of war. What is the punishment for such actions in the face of the enemy?"

"Death, sir," returned the adjutant-general, solemnly.

"Are you all agreed as to that, gentlemen?"

"We are, sir," was the unanimous reply.

They had been well tutored in the little comedy which the general, had arranged, it was evident.

"Impossible, sir!" cried Sempland, in agony. They deceived even him with their

seriousness. "This is most irregular! I protest—"

"I am ready, gentlemen," whispered Fanny Glen, bravely, turning very white as she spoke, and not appearing at all ready in fact, "I — I — am glad to — suffer, since Captain Sempland—" she faltered with a miserable attempt at courage.

"One moment, please," broke in the little general, imperatively. "But, gentlemen, the culprit has otherwise deserved well of her country, as you know. During the war her services in the general hospital have been beyond price. She is a woman. On the ship which it was proposed to blow up was her father, Admiral Vernon, a South Carolinian, whose ideas of duty led him to continue his services to the United States. These are mitigating circumstances. Here is no treachery to the South, merely

a woman's desire to save her father from a swift and sudden death. No mischance has arisen from her action. Major Lacy took out the boat with his usual distinction, although, fortunately for the lady and the admiral, the *Housatonic* seems to have suffered instead of the *Wabash*. Under these circumstances, I think, it does not behoove us to be too severe. You agree with me, I am sure, gentlemen?"

"Certainly, sir, we do," replied the officers in chorus.

"Thank you! thank you!" exclaimed Fanny Glen, gratefully, with boundless relief in her voice.

By this time she was as close to Sempland as she could get, and entirely unconscious of what he was doing, the latter had thrown his arm protectingly around her waist.

"Wait, Miss Glen," said the general, severely, lifting his hand and checking her further speech, "you cannot think to escape scot free. Such actions cannot go entirely unpunished. So long as Miss Fanny Glen exists she must suffer for her actions. You are agreed with me, gentlemen?"

"We are, sir."

It was remarkable the unanimity with which they all supported their general's decisions on so serious a matter, and practically without deliberation.

"Captain Sempland, as a soldier, I am sure you will acquiesce in the views of your brother officers."

Sempland bit his lip. Fanny Glen nestled closer to him and looked up at him beseechingly.

"Oh, General!" he said at last. "Isn't there some way out of it?"

"There may be," said the general, solemnly. "Let me think a moment. Suppose — ah, suppose, Miss Fanny Glen were to disappear?"

"But where can I go, sir?" asked the girl, nervously. "All that I love —" she observed a smile flickering upon the general's lips as she glanced at Sempland. "I mean everybody and everything that I love is here." She stamped her foot impatiently. "You won't send me to the Union fleet? I know my father is safe — but I love the South. I will never do anything wrong again if you won't send me away!" she pleaded.

It was, indeed, a sweeping promise, one she could scarcely have kept.

"There are other ways by which Miss Fanny Glen might disappear," said Beauregard, gravely.

"How, sir?"

"You might change your name — again!"

"Change my name?"

"Yes. You might become — Mrs. Rhett Sempland, let us say!"

"O-o-oh!" cried the girl, blushing furiously and drawing away from her lover's side.

"Quite so," answered the general with deep gravity, too deep not to be suspicious, while Sempland's heart leaped with happiness. This was the meaning of the general's little play, then?

"Proceedings which would have to be instituted against Fanny Glen could then be allowed to drop," continued Beauregard, enjoying the situation immensely. "Is not that a solution, gentlemen?" he asked, throwing back his head and laugh-

ing cheerfully at the pleasant ending of the little comedy he had planned, which pleased the small audience hugely.

"That is the happiest of all solutions, sir," said Sempland, taking Fanny Glen's hands.

"I won't be married simply to save my life," said the girl.

"Of course not," said the general. "Yet either you must be court-martialled or Mr. Sempland will be."

"I — I might do it — to save — his life, sir," she said, blushing furiously again.

"However it is done — " said Sempland, "however it may be brought about, it satisfies me completely."

"'If 'twere done when 'tis done, 'twere well 'twere done quickly,'" quoted the general with striking appositeness, greatly delighted at the outcome of the affair.

"I agree with you entirely, sir," returned Sempland, smiling — it was the part of wisdom for a captain to agree with a general always, and the way of prudence was the path of pleasure in this instance.

"Captain Sempland," said Beauregard, "your orders need not be carried out until to-morrow. There will be time enough before that time for a wedding, in which, in the absence of her father, I promise myself the pleasure of giving away the bride. Now, gentlemen, we will leave the — ah — two culprits to talk it over for a few moments. Let me know your decision, Miss Glen, as soon as may be, that I may decide whether to assemble or dissolve the court. And rest assured the happenings of last night and this morning, so far as they concern

Miss Glen, are not to be spoken outside this room by any one. Good morning."

"Fanny Glen," said Sempland, when they were alone once more, "are you marrying me to save yourself?"

She shook her head.

"Rhett Sempland, are you marrying me," she asked in return, "to save yourself?"

"I am marrying you, you little darling, as you very well know, because I love you."

"And that is my reason, too," said Fanny Glen.

"Fanny Glen," he said imperiously, "come here!"

And to him she came with astonishing meekness.

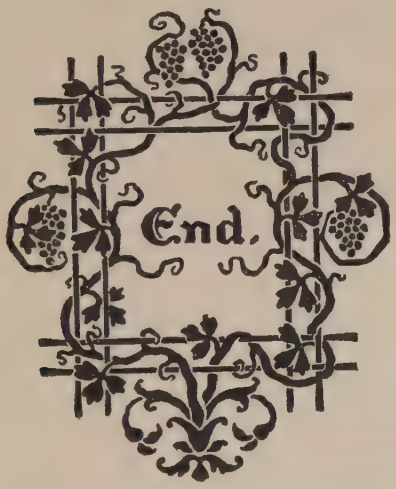
"Put your arms around my neck!"

And obediently there she put them!

"Lift up your head!"

Slowly, surely, up it came!

After all, Fanny Glen did love a masterful man!



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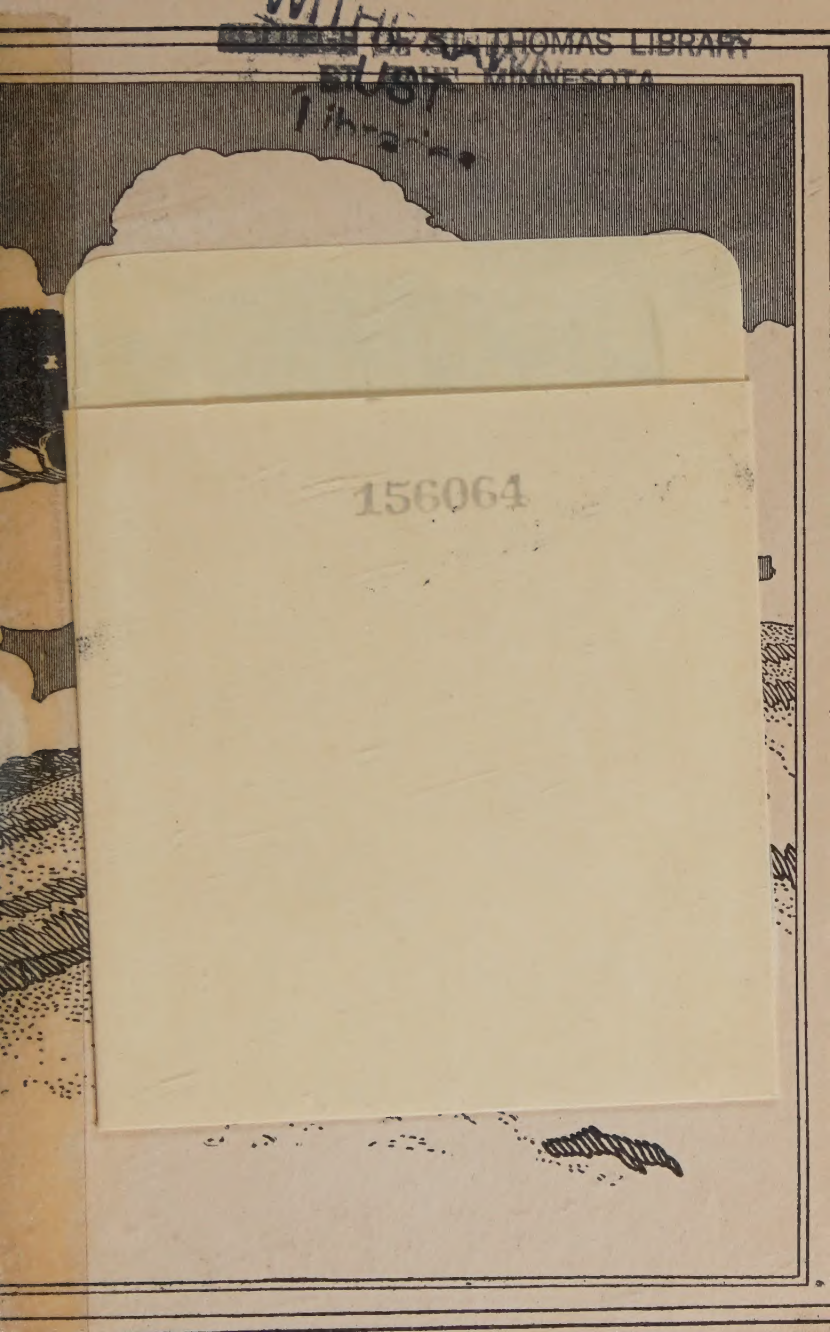

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